LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS

UPERSTITIONS AND LEGENDS.

(Continued).

(By Caboden Pocklington).

he following is abridged from a very scarce
r published in 1837 under the *nom de plume*
nthony Oldbuck, Gent, entitled—

A LEGEND OF BC[illegible]

upon his horse, or breaking his spear. The combatants rushed towards each other with great force and correctness of aim, both retaining their seats, but their spears shattered. Being supplied with fresh spears they renewed the attack, and so on for several courses. The other champions then tilted with each other in like manner. The victory was considered to be nearly equally divided. After a space the combatants returned to the course and tried their prowess at the *tourney*. They were armed [illegible] swords, though in the former tournaments [illegible] used. Two parties joining an-

TRADITIONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

&c., &c.

TRADITIONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE,

(FIRST SERIES.)

BOSTON IN THE OLDEN TIMES;

A SERIES OF

LEGENDS AND TALES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF BOSTON

AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BY ROGER QUAINT,

Monk of the Order of St. Francis, and formerly of the Grey Friary, South End, Boston.

" Listene these lays, for some there bethe
Of love which stronger is than dethe;
And some of scorne, and some of guile,
And old adventures that fell while."

ANON.

BOSTON;

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN NOBLE.

SOLD BY SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO., LONDON; AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

[1841]

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A BROWN STUDY

IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY,

BEING AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER, OR PRO-PREFACE.

Over the southern porch of Boston Church is a spacious chamber, fitted up as a library, and stored with many valuable works, both in ancient and modern literature, but which the hand of time, by its usual relentless ministers, moth, damp, and dust, is fast hastening to decay.

This neglected depository of the literary treasures of past times, was established in the year 1635, and in the reign of Charles I., by the celebrated Dr. Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, then on his metropolitical visitation to Boston; who, in consequence of an application to that effect from the Rev. Anthony Tuckney, vicar of Boston, ordained, "that the roome over the porch of the saide church shall be repaired and decently fitted up to make

a librarye, to the end that, in case any well and charitably disposed person shall bestow any books to the use of the parish, they may be there safely preserved and kept."

In this library, which at present consists of several hundred volumes, are to be found many valuable and scarce works, choice editions of the Greek and Roman Classics, ponderous tomes of controversial divinity, standard historians, and fabulous chroniclers;—nay, even glorious Chaucer himself, in all the dignity of black-letter folio; together with a curious medley of minor writers, many of whom seem astonished to find themselves cheek-by-jowl with ancient fathers, and learned divines, in a church library.

A propensity to forage amongst the records of by-gone days, often tempted me to disturb the *sacred* dust, beneath which time and neglect had long buried these remains of the immortal dead,—the visits of other labourers in the same mine being, like those of angels, 'few and far between.'

'Twas towards the close of a fine summer's day, that I was induced to resort to the chamber in question, in search of a scarce volume, which I had reason to believe was to be found upon its shelves; but it was not until after a long and laborious search,—for many of the brass-bound folios are immensely heavy,—that I discovered the prize I sought. Evening had far advanced, and I was

intently poring over the moth-eaten volume, whose leaves were falling from its vellum cover, when methought I heard a rustling near me,—the dead stillness of the church rendering the slightest sound perceptible,—and on turning suddenly round, I was surprised to see at my elbow a tall figure in the frock and hood of a Franciscan Friar, with a small silk scull-cap over his shaven crown, from beneath which curls of rich auburn hair escaped in profusion down his shoulders. I had full leisure to remark thus much, for his back was towards me, and I had no idea at the time that I was then in company with any other than a being of flesh and blood.

"Who could he be that had thus imperceptibly intruded himself upon my privacy?—he was certainly not there a minute before." Such were the first thoughts that rushed upon my mind.

Presently he raised his eyes from the book he was perusing, and turned them slowly upon me;—but there was no expression of surprise or embarrassment in the mild and placid features that presented themselves to my startled gaze. Nay, the complacent smile that lit up for a moment that handsome and gracious countenance, was rather the greeting of an ancient friend, that was happy to renew a former intimacy, than of one, who found himself suddenly in contact with a stranger. And although I now knew, and felt, that I was in the presence

of a being of another world, perhaps of the genius of the place, or at least of *mine own familiar*, I experienced none of the sensations common to such unwonted visitations, nor was my alarm increased, when he saluted me in a deep, but harmonious voice, as follows,

" Salve, domine."

" Salvus sis et tu, pater venerande." responded I.

" Benedicite." rejoined the spirit.

" Spiritus tuus quiescat in pace." resumed I, with a profound obeisance.

" I will assist and direct your researches, and supply you with the information you desire." continued the apparition, in the vernacular.

" But how know you the immediate object of my pursuit, beyond general information?" enquired I.

There was a placid smile on the countenance of the phantom, as he replied, " Have I not been ever at your elbow on your former visits to this literary sepulchre?—Have I not noted every passage you have sought out;—and, over your shoulder, have I not read every portion you have selected, as well as every extract you have made?—how then can you doubt my knowledge of the sort of information you are seeking?"

" And how happens it, gracious shade," I retorted, " that I have never before been favoured with an ocular demonstration of your presence?"

"Because it has so pleased me," rejoined the spirit, "nor would you now have been so honoured, but for the congeniality of our views on certain points, and other reasons, which you may know hereafter. Take this volume." he added, "It contains all the information you require. Benè vale, nostri memor!"

With the last words he vanished from my sight,—melted into thin air,—and I stood for some time paralysed,—not with fear,—but with astonishment at the extraordinary occurrence. How long this torpor of the external senses lasted, I know not, but during its continuance I must have hurried home, for on recovering my ordinary apprehension of sublunary matters, I found myself seated in my study, with the magic volume before me.

I am quite aware that many will say, this was merely a dream I had whilst dozing over the expiring embers of my study fire; and, that others perhaps will throw in my teeth the old proverb, originally formed from a corruption of the Latin prayer, which begins "O mi beate Martine." To such I yield full liberty to enjoy their fancied penetration, in discovering that the MS. thus strangely thrown into my hands, is nothing but a creation of my own imagination; and, strong in the integrity of my purpose, turn with pleasure from such stiff-necked unbelievers to the gentle reader, who, content to be amused, pries not with too severe a scrutiny into the ways and means

I have only to add, that whatever may be considered good in the following pages, is to be exclusively ascribed to the gracious phantom, from whose manuscript it has been transcribed; and that whatever is bad is all my own. To shelter myself however from the consequences of the latter, I have taken the liberty of placing the name of my ethereal friend upon the title page, that he who gains the praise may also share the blame.

Should the public deem our joint lucubrations worthy of patronage, I shall perhaps be induced again to draw upon the ample folios of the aforesaid magic volume.

THE EDITOR.

Boston, Jan. 30th, 1841.

THE MASQUERS;

OR, THE MERRY PILGRIMS.

CHAPTER I.

"What noisy rogues be these,
That wake the echoes of our peaceful vale?"

The Royal Castle of Bolingbroke stood in the centre of a vast amphitheatre of hills, open towards the south-east, in which direction the prospect extended over the adjacent fens as far as Boston and the sea.

On the evening upon which our narrative commences, the setting sun was shedding a mellow radiance upon the venerable battlements of this ancient fortress, when the brow of the hill, which formed the northern boundary of the valley, became suddenly peopled with a numerous company of travellers, both male and female, in all the variety of costume peculiar to the fantastic taste of the age of which we write.

Slowly did the motley throng wend their way down the hill; the ladies on ambling palfreys; and the gentlemen, some on horseback and some on foot, the better to assist their fair fellow travellers in the descent. The party-coloured mantles and glittering arms of the men, blending with the flowing draperies and rich head dresses

of the ladies, gave a splendid and imposing effect to the whole cavalcade: while the jingle of bells attached to the horses' bridles, the sound of drums, hautboys, and trumpets, mingled with the song, the laugh and the merry jest, combined to give life and spirit to the cheerful scene. Such were the appearance and demeanour of this pious company, for such they professed to be, however few the outward signs they displayed. On completing the descent the road ran along the outer verge of the fosse, so that the inmates of the Castle had a good view of the whole party, which amounted to nearly two hundred.

The unexpected arrival of such unusual visitors within the precincts of the Honour of Bolingbroke, created no small commotion amongst the peaceful inhabitants of the secluded town, who all turned out to bid them welcome. Impelled by the same motive as their more humble neighbours, the ladies of the Castle took their station in the embrasure of a window, which commanded a view of the road, to see the strangers as they passed. Many were the caps doffed to the lady Rosabel and her pretty companion; but the gay greetings and saucy compliments of the wassailers quickly drove the blushing damsels from their post; and the evening presently after closing in, the tumult subsided into a distant murmur, interrupted only by occasional bursts of music and laughter, showing that neither wine nor travel had yet entirely hushed the noisy voice of mirth.

Christine in the mean time had tripped away to the porter's lodge to learn the meaning of this extraordinary procession, and on her return reported it to consist of pilgrims, merchants, mummers and wassailers, journeying to the great mart at Boston, for the various purposes

of religion, pleasure, and traffic. "But what think you?" continued she, "that surly old seneschal, my father, has caused the gates to be closed, and the bridge to be raised; and vows he will allow no one to quit the Castle until the town is well cleared of these vagabonds, as his inveteracy styles this goodly company of gallant fellows and happy damsels. Really, though he is my father, he is a sad old churl."

"Well, but how can this affect you, silly girl, who certainly do not wish to join yonder riotous assembly, whose conduct so ill becomes the devotion proper to their ostensible pilgrimage?"

"I know not that, lady Rosabel; nor will I promise, despite my father's prohibition, that I will not visit them this night. Did your ladyship observe the mad tricks of the merry rogues; and the burly old father Bluff, the jolly vicar of Horncastle;—and his squire and lieutenant, the handsome young yeoman minstrel? Oh! how I should love to accompany them to the merry makings, and festivities of the royal mart of Boston."

The rebuke which hung upon the lips of Rosabel was here suspended by the approach of an ancient matron, whose shrill voice gave notice of her proximity long before she herself became visible. This old lady, whose name was Cicely Moreton, having been the nurse of Henry the Fourth in his infancy, had been allowed apartments in the Castle ever since that memorable event; and, presuming upon the indulgence of successive governors, had become as much the tyrant of the kitchen and larder, as the old seneschal was of the garrison in general. Indeed the struggles for supremacy between these two officials were daily and desperate, each encroaching upon the

other's domain, and each repelling the aggression with all the venom of wordy warfare.

"Insolent and presumptuous knave!" such were the first words distinguished in the rapid flow of her angry eloquence;—"am I to be thus insulted by a drunken old soldier?—Hag! harridan! indeed!—are these contemptuous terms fit to be applied to Cicely Moreton, who has fondled in her arms, and cherished at her breast, the princely and glorious Harry the Fourth of England? No;—I will no longer endure such treatment;—I will quickly know whether I am to be kept a prisoner in the Castle like the lowest menial at the will of a tyrannical seneschal, who takes advantage of the absence of the governor to abuse his brief authority. In the time of my good lady Blanche, the humble Simon Briton, who now bears himself so proudly, would have thought himself honoured by a kind look or a passing word from her he now treats with such contumely."

Thus speaking in bounced the old lady, tall of stature, gaunt of figure, raised on high heeled shoes, with a lofty head-geer, that added greatly to her extraordinary height, and of which her pride, notwithstanding her great age, did not allow her to lose a single inch. She flounced about and tossed her head more like a damsel of sixteen than a matron of seventy; raising a cloud of dust and perfume in her passage, the former caused by the sweep of her long train and hanging sleeves, and the latter by the motion her vivacity communicated to the curls of her flaxen wig. But her anger had not yet exhausted itself, and she thus resumed her declamation, on being addressed by Rosabel.

"What is the matter, good nurse?"

"Matter enough forsooth: but you will hardly believe, my dear young lady, the indignities I am compelled to put up with. You must know then that having observed my kinsman, Jerry Stalwart, and his buxom daughter Jane, in the company of godly pilgrims now foregathered in the town, I donned my braves to go and visit them this evening; which was but seemly, for cousin Jerry is well to do in the world, and"—"Was also an ancient flame of your's nurse;" said the roguish Christine. "Silence, vixen, and listen to my tale of woe without any of your pert remarks. Well, as I was saying, Jerry being my near kinsman, for his mother's first husband was half brother to my good man, (whose soul God rest,) I thought it only proper to go and enquire of his welfare: but when I came to the port, lo and behold, to my utter astonishment, the gates were closed, the bridge raised, and no passage open for dame Cicely Moreton to go and visit her kinsman! And when I told the warder to open the gates for me, the knave flatly refused, pleading the orders of the seneschal. To Master Simon Briton I accordingly repaired; when with all the insolence of his petty office, he declared he would not let me pass the portals, under some vain pretence of suspicion as to the character of the assembly which rests this night in the town. So much for the impudence of this self-styled captain."

"Marry, dame Moreton, you give your tongue too great a licence, to speak thus of my father, who is as truly a captain as you are the royal nurse you so often tell us of."

The old lady looked at Christine as if astonished at her presumption, yet hurt at her unkindness; and all her

ire having spent itself upon the captain, she replied only, "And do you too, Christine, turn your sarcasms upon your old nurse?" Hereupon her feelings being wrought up to a high state of excitement, she burst into tears, partly of spite and partly of vexation; and was only prevented from falling into hysterics by the assiduous application of the remedies in that case made and provided.

CHAPTER II.

" If thou lovest me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood a league without the town,
There will I stay for thee." SHAKESPEARE.

As the bell tolled nine, a lady was seen to issue from a small sally-port in an angle of the Castle wall, which opened upon the inner bank of the fosse.

" Who goes there ?" was her challenge addressed to a dark form which gloomed on the opposite verge.

" Love and honour:" was the whispered reply.—Whereupon the fair night-walker stepped into a skiff which lay near, and paddled it over the moat with a dexterity that showed her not unpractised in that clandestine mode of quitting the Castle. With a light heart and a nimble foot she sprang upon the bank, and was presently shrouded in the arms and mantle of the gentleman in waiting, who led her through the wood towards the village. They had not proceeded far when they suddenly encountered four fen-men, wild and desperate looking fellows, of sallow visage, gaunt form, and rude and scanty garb. The notorious brutality of these ruffians, and their love of plunder even to blood, affrighted the maiden, and she besought her lover, if possible, to avoid them, which the young soldier, for her sake would wil-

lingly have done, but the rencounter had now unfortunately become inevitable, for the boors had already hailed him with a loud shout of brutal triumph, as if they had unexpectedly pounced upon a prize. On they came,—four as truculent looking fellows as ever graced a gallows-tree; their long visages obscured by thick shaggy hair, which escaped from beneath small thrum caps; and brandishing huge bludgeons in their hands, for the skilful exercise of which the fen-men were celebrated.

"Oh, oh, gallant sir!—and oh, oh, fair lady!—a fair good e'en to your worships:" said the first ruffian in a tone of mock courtesy. "Have you any pretty trifles, or paltry baubles, such as a golden rosary, or a jewelled cross, to bestow upon the poor fen-men? We be honest men who will thankfully receive at your hands whatever your worships may be pleased to bestow."

"Aye, aye," roared the others, flourishing their clubs, and laughing loudly at the banter of their comrade; "we be humble petitioners for your bounty."

"Why, gentlemen," said the youth, "as you speak so fairly, I have no objection to present you with the only trifle I have just now at your service; and here it is:" shouted he, as he drew his sword and made a thrust at one of the robbers, which laid him a corpse at his feet.

At the first flash of the weapon the lady fled, and as one of the fellows turned to pursue her, the lover flew upon him like a tiger, and passing his sword through his unguarded body, followed rapidly the receding steps of his mistress, before the two survivors had time to intercept his retreat. At the outskirts of the wood he succeeded in overtaking the damsel, who almost fainted in his arms; but, on being assured of his safety, she recov-

ered sufficiently to continue the flight until they found themselves amongst the tents of the pilgrims on the south side of the town. Here whilst they tarried to recover breath, two muffled strangers rode rapidly towards the Castle, but reined up their horses near them to enquire the meaning of the assemblage of such a motley multitude in so unusual a place.

"This holy company of pilgrims, noble sirs," said a sprightly youth in green, who wore the silver badge and chain of a yeoman-minstrel, "is journeying to the shrine of our Lady of Mount Carmel at St. Bodolph's."

"And you, I presume," said one of the horsemen, "are their conductor and ghostly father."

"So please you, kind sir; for the worthy shaveling who enacts that part, lies snoring in yonder booth overcome by the fervour of his devotion to the pottle-pot, I am therefore for the present both minstrel and friar. Should it please you to join our good company, you may depend upon my fatherly counsel and protection."

"You are a hopeful youth," quoth the younger horseman, "to take charge of so large and fair a company of damsels."

"Truly my hands are quite full of them, as you say, but I find no difficulty in obtaining assistance in that department of my important office from the young fellows who accompany me; yet such is the glut of the bonny kirtles that I can immediately put you in commission of some lovely forlorn one, whom you shall chaperon if you will make one of us."

"We thank you for your courtesy, sir minstrel, and would gladly avail ourselves of your powerful patronage, but that at present we are otherwise engaged. You depart for Boston on the morrow?"

"Early in the morning;" was the reply.

The strangers with a courteous "good night," resumed their journey, and immediately after crossing by a ford the small "boling-broke," from which the Castle, town and king have all derived their names, turned into a road that led to the Castle, and were presently out of sight.

"These be gay birds, and of high feather, or I am mistaken," said the minstrel.

"Aye, truly," answered his neighbour. "Did you mark the jewel that sparkled in the youngster's cap?"

"Higher perchance than you imagine," grumbled a surly fellow from behind an adjoining tree.

"Why, who may they be?" enquired several voices at once.

"That is as it may be," responded the same ungra-gracious growl.

"Why, you are mysterious, brother mine;" retorted the minstrel, "and would persuade us you know more than you are pleased to tell. 'Tis a shallow conceit, and often proceeds from as shallow a brain."

"If they be not from the court," chimed in a third, "they are propably some of Hotspur's runaway lords, who find it convenient to travel under favour of the night."

"They cannot be rebels," replied another, "or they would avoid the Castle, and I saw them turn their horses' heads towards the draw-bridge. That would be like running into the lion's mouth."

"It may perchance prove so to them notwithstanding," was the ominous reply that again proceeded from the dark shadow of the tree, from which a tall figure presently glided away into the distant gloom.

"There be more mummers in our company, I fear, than are well disposed," murmured several of the stragglers, as they betook themselves warily to their several tents for the night, and left our lovers to do the same. These, on hearing the end of the preceding gossip, hastened to a small cottage in a retired part of the village.

There was neither light nor sound perceptible to give token of inhabitants, yet, after a single knock and a whispered pass-word, the door was opened, and they entered.

On a miserable bed, in a back room, lay a fine old gentleman fast asleep, whose white locks were dabbled in blood from a wound on the temple, over which was bound a silk scarf. The convulsive shudder, which occasionally passed over his pallid and deeply-furrowed brow, showed that he laboured, even in sleep, under bodily pain and mental anxiety. A splendidly embroidered doublet and cloak lay across the foot of the bed, and a richly mounted sword and dagger hung from a peg in the wall, over which also was placed a plumed velvet cap peculiar to those of high rank.

To the enquiries of the young man, the aged attendant replied, "My lord has slept soundly these two hours, and the fever has considerably abated, so that with proper care and rest I trust he will be out of danger in two or three days."

"Out of danger, Margery! Would to God I could think so; but, truth to tell, perils thicken around us, for I fear that the strangers we saw just now proceeding to the Castle, come commissioned to search for, and arrest, all fugitives who may lie concealed in this neighbourhood, and then my poor father will be the first victim sacrificed to the vengeance of the enraged king."

" Do not indulge in such dreadful surmises, my dear Rupert," said the young lady, " but, that all doubt on this head may be set at rest, it is necessary that I return forthwith to the Castle, to watch the course of events, and prevent my absence from being discovered, for I shall certainly be sought for on the arrival of guests. Should danger threaten you, I will show a light from the window of my apartment, and immediately extinguish it; but if I let it continue to burn steadily, be assured you have nothing to fear."

" Ever my guardian angel, my sweet Christine!" said the young man, pressing her to his breast,—" You were made to be a soldier's bride, for you are prompt to act upon emergency, as well as quick to discern the best way out of a labyrinth of difficulties."

Again the loving pair issued fourth into the darkness, their hearts glowing with that generous devotion to each other, which insensible to self concentrates all its happiness in that of the beloved object.

CHAPTER III.

"At the Baron of Mowbray's gate was seen
A page with a courser white." SONG.

THERE was an apartment in the Castle called the Spanish chamber, which had originally been fitted up for the princess Blanche, shortly after her marriage with John of Gaunt, furnished in the most costly style, and containing every luxury that the times had introduced, or wealth could procure. This splendid room was assigned to the lady Rosabel, nor did any one presume to enter it without her special permission, except her favourite and companion, Christine, and the dame Moreton.

The former of these damsels was a *blonde*, tall and remarkably fair, with hair of a nut-brown shade, and her form exquisitely moulded. Her mind was strongly tinctured with romance, which the character of the age, her conventual education, and a long secluded residence in the Castle of Bolingbroke, had tended to confirm. There were other causes which had heightened this feeling in an extraordinary degree, namely, the legendary tales with which dame Moreton's memory and fluent tongue were wont to wile away the tedious hours;—to these must be added the long accounts of moving accidents by flood and field, with which the veteran Simon frequently astounded the ears, and harrowed up the feelings of his

credulous hearers on a winter's night. Thus was her imagination constantly filled with dreams of love and chivalry; or, if the genius of pandemonium were in the ascendant, all the spirits of earth and air assembled in the theatre of her mind, and enacted their fantastic horrors in all the vivid colouring of youthful fancy.

These traits, though savouring strongly of weakness, were redeemed by an energy of character, and a boldness of spirit, equal to the most trying emergency: and, indeed, it may be here remarked, that the gentlest and most feminine of the dear sisterhood, have generally displayed a higher spirit, and a more decisive character, in the day of trial, than those ladies whose general demeanour is of a more masculine order.

Her chosen companion and confidential friend, Christine, was a sparkling beauty of another order,—dark as the daughters of Spain, from one of whom she was descended, her eye had the bright glow—the fiery quickness—of an eastern glance. Her form also was faultless, but remarkably small, and her vivacity not to be repressed. She was accomplished far beyond the generality of her sex in the times of which we write, playing delightfully on the harp and citole, and executing delicate needlework, and rich embroidery with equal skill and taste.

The former of these fair maidens, wrapt in those pleasing dreams in which romantic visionaries delight to indulge, was reclining on a large sofa in the apartment above described; fascinating pictures of handsome cavaliers, gallant knights, glorious tournaments, fairy palaces, and propitious genii, were successively flitting in charming disorder through her mind, when her reverie

were suddenly disturbed by the sound of a bugle, and she sprang from her recumbent posture as if some of her wild fancies were on the instant to be realized. After a short pause the bugle sounded again, and was followed by loud and continued knocks. These were repeated at intervals for some time, and apparently without effect. Surprised at the summons not being answered by the warder, she was about to go and enquire the cause, when Christine hurried into the room, her dress disordered, and her cheeks flushed with the haste of her return from her secret expedition.

"Ah, my dear Rosabel, I am glad to find you here, for I was afraid you had retired to rest.—You must be brave,—here be noble guests at the Castle gate. But fie upon these saucy jack-men, for, knowing that my father had withdrawn to his nocturnal devotions with the chaplain, they have made the old warder drunk, and persuaded him to open the gates to allow them to quit the Castle, and join the wassailers in the village. The old man has from instinct fastened the inner gate, and now sleeps soundly in his great arm chair, from which I have in vain endeavoured to rouse him."

"But what can we do?"

"Try to open the gate ourselves."

Impelled by curiosity, and without considering for a moment what might be the consequence of the step they were about to take, the two young ladies tripped lightly down the circular stairs, crossed the court, and took from the feeble hands of the snoring porter the ponderous key. Still they hesitated between fear and doubt of the propriety of their conduct; and so startled were they at the clamorous renewal of the knocking that they were on the

point of flying to the apartment they had left, but resuming their courage they at last ventured to open a small grate and parley with those without.

"Are you the governor of the castle, my pretty damsel?" said a merry voice from without, as Christine peeped through the gratings. "Yes, so please you, for the present. But what may be your pleasure, sir?"

"You being governor, fair one, our business is with you. We are from the court of our good king Henry, who by us greets the governor of his native Castle of Bolingbroke, which, by the bye, he little suspects is so fairly garrisoned, and so ably commanded."

"Gra'mercy, Christine;—says he not he is from the king?—Call your father.—Or stay;—let us admit them.—They are perhaps some great men who will make an evil report of this want of courtesy."

"Oh, if they be noble lords, they are at least young and merry ones, by the sound of their voices," replied Christine, "therefore let us admit them by all means."

With some difficulty, Christine, assisted by Rosabel, succeeded in drawing the bolts and opening the gate, whereupon the gallants throwing the bridles over their horses' necks, entered, apparently in no ill humour, notwithstanding their long detention at the gate.

"We are your grateful debtors, fair ladies, for your courteous admission, however tardy; and as you are the only portion of the garrison who at present keep watch and ward, allow us, as in duty bound, to pay the salutations due."

And suiting the action to the word, the young speaker was about to kiss Christine, when his gallantry received a sudden and somewhat boisterous check.

CHAPTER IV.

"Do not think, gentlemen, that I am drunk;—this is my ancient;—this is my right hand, and this my left hand:—I am not drunk:—you must not think that I am drunk." SHAKESPEARE.

In the early part of August, 1403, shortly after the death of that star of chivalry, Henry Hotspur, and the general dispersion of the rebels at Shrewsbury, Sir Owen Tudor, constable of the Royal Castle and Honour of Bolingbroke, was summoned to attend the king in his progress to the north. He left the fortress under the command of his lieutenant, Simon Briton, an approved and loyal soldier; to whose vigilance he also confided his only and beloved daughter, Rosabel.

Simon Briton, or, as he was generally styled, "the captain," was a short portly old gentleman, of a rubicund and good-natured aspect, the rosy hue of which was rendered more striking by a profusion of snow-white hair, which covered his head and upper lip. The restless twinkle of his small eyes, and an habitual nervous twitch of his bushy eyebrows, showed him of a temperament easily excited, and extremely captious. He had been from his youth a confidential follower of the House of Lancaster, and had received the appointment he held many years prior to the date of this narrative, from no

less a person than John of Gaunt himself, under whom he had served with zeal and honour in France and Spain.

He was also one of those that delight to figure as great men in the drama of life, and who make the most of the characters assigned to them; his manner and language were consequently always pompous and imposing, and particularly so when he acquired the right to domineer by being left in command of the "Royal Castle and Honour of Bolingbroke," as he never failed to style his small kingdom.

It will be readily conceived that such a person found few who dared to thwart his imperious will, either in the garrison or the neighbouring township, for his power was indisputable, and the frequent absence of the Lord Constable left him at full liberty to exercise it according to his whim and pleasure. On these occasions the lady Rosabel was the only person who had any influence over the self-willed old soldier, for from long connexion with the great he had acquired an almost blind deference for rank, which at once commanded from him passive obedience.

The men-at-arms and other retainers about the Castle, found their principal relief from the severe discipline he generally kept up, in the old soldier's devotion to the pottle-pot. For no sooner were they assured that he was safely ensconced behind the well-known mighty tankard, than they knew themselves secure from discovery, however wild their pranks; for the jolly old toper on these occasions seemed to forget the world and all its vanities. Friar Philip, the chaplain of the Castle, was the only person admitted to the celebration of these Bacchanalian rites, than whom a more efficient help-mate could not possibly have been chosen.

That these two worthies were engaged in their usual symposium during the events of the preceding chapter has been already intimated, and the train of our narrative leads us to record a part of their edifying conversation.

"Spare not the pottle-pot, brother Philip, or you are no true son of mother church. I never yet knew civilian or layman that could cope with a soldier or a priest at the wine flask."

"Fairly spoken, jolly companion;—nor will you find me slow to support the reputation of our several callings, which certainly agree in that point, however dissimilar in others, for you are a man of war, and I of peace." And the good priest raising the pitcher to his lips drained its contents to the last drop; whereupon the replenishing of the said pitcher became the subject of debate.

"May Beelzebub fly away with these knavish serving-men, who leave me,—me, the representative of his Majesty's Lord Constable,—nay, of Majesty itself,—to draw mine own wine."

"Fret not yourself, noble captain;—I will undertake the office of cellarer on the present occasion, if it so please you."

"Aye, aye, holy father," replied the captain with a hearty laugh, "'tis kindly proffered. And, pray, when might I expect to see your reverence return from the lower regions? No, no, I will even be my own knave, for I could ill support the weight of your bulky person up the cellar stairs in addition to that of the flagon; and if you once got amongst the puncheons, your own legs I misdoubt would never bring you up again into the regions of light."

"Nay, now you are scandalous, captain;—this too amongst friends!"

The difficulty of recharging the exhausted cups was at length obviated by the joint voyage of the two worthies to a vault of the castle, the depositary of a quantity of choice old wines of the best quality. Arrived at this haven of their wishes, and being curious in their liquor, they broached and tasted several sorts in succession, and that so freely, that they were little inclined to quit their strong hold, more particularly as the ascent was both steep and rugged, and they would have to peril their necks in the venture. Having therefore drawn trestles up to the barrel most agreeable to their palate, they jovially sat down, as it were at the fountain head of happiness, and thus removed the possibility of future disputes touching a regular supply of their beverage.

The orgies of these veteran compotators were at length disturbed by the sound of a bugle, and finally by loud and repeated knocks at the gate of the Castle.

"What makes this hurly," said the captain. "This now is some drunken frolic of these holyday fools, I ween. A cloth-yard shaft through the fool's brains would make him remember playing his pranks before a Royal Castle. 'Tis strange that my people, notwithstanding my frequent admonitions on the subject, will still give way to that pernicious vice, drunkenness."

"Aye, aye, you say truly," replied the priest, on recovering his breath, which the length of a recent draught had quite exhausted, "it is indeed extraordinary that men should be so dull and besotted. Nay, incredible as it must appear, I can assure you that at the very time when I have been declaiming with holy fervour against

the insidious and seductive liquor, the wine cup has still continued to circulate with unabated rapidity, nor has a single guest declined to do honour to its contents, so inveterate is the fatal propensity."

"A truce, brother, to thy preachment," said the captain, "and give me your opinion of this fine old Bourdeaux."

Whereupon the priest, nothing loath, after imbibing the best part of a pint at a draught, exclaimed, "Exquisite, noble captain! Good wine like this is always free from the malison which rests upon the goblets of vulgar and unprivileged wine-bibbers, whose muddy beverage at once disorganizes the system, clouds the brain, and corrupts the body, while those who partake of generous liquor like this, brighten the imagination and add new life and vigour both to mind and body."

"You speak like an honest priest and a holy friar, as you are, Philip, and I pledge you with all my heart. I never heard you expound such sound doctrine before."

Here again the knocking became very loud, and was followed by a point of war blown upon a bugle.

"By'r Lady, but that flourish tingles in mine ears,—'tis 'the Reveillé of Lancaster.' Who presumes to blow it now unless he heralds the approach of blood-royal? Come, come, father Philip, this must be looked to. By my good sword, I know not but the glorious Harry of Bolingbroke is now standing before his own castle gate, whilst we are carousing in his cellar."

He arose, and, tottering a few steps, would have fallen, had he not supported himself against one of the barrels.

"Why, captain,—noble captain, what ails you? Surely the slight refection you have taken, has not weakened your knees. It matters not,—I will myself go and reconnoitre, and bring you information forthwith."

The jolly friar rose accordingly, but before he had taken three steps his portly person rolled on the floor, and the old soldier, delighted to see his co-mate as far gone as himself, made the vaults echo with his long laugh and uproarous mirth. However, after sundry mishaps, the worthy couple emerged from the cellar, and arm in arm, with unsteady steps approached the hall, at the very moment the young stranger was on the point of saluting, somewhat familiarly, the captain's daughter.

"Zounds and furies! what is this?" bellowed Simon, roughly pushing the young gentleman on one side.

"Softly and quietly, captain;—steady, captain, steady," said the priest, but the caution was unheeded by the furious father, for the sight he had just seen had at once sobered him, and he now confronted the strangers with a firm yet fierce aspect.

"What means this?—Your courtesy, gentlemen, is, methinks, indeed extreme, and requires fitting answer. How dare you thus enter a royal fortress, and assail its garrison in its weakest point? Can such conduct be justified?"

"Pray, Sir," said the elder stranger, "whom have we the honour to address?

"Captain Briton, lieutenant governor of the Royal Castle and Honour of Bolingbroke."

"Oh, I cry you mercy, noble captain: we took this fair damsel for the governor, as being at his post, and answering to the name."

"Now, gentlemen, as I have told you who I am; may I beg the same courtesy of you?"

"This will inform you:" he gives a letter.

'To Captain Briton, lieutenant of Bolingbroke Castle.

'These greeting.—Our noble kinsmen, the lords Neville and Lacey, journeying through Lincolnshire, will sojourn for a time at our Castle of Bolingbroke; and it is our command that you treat them in every respect as if ourself had taken up our residence with you.

'Given at our Camp, at Derby, HENRY.'
July 30th, 1403.'

The blustering captain, on reading this, immediately changed his tone and manners; and with stammering and respectful words addressed the gay intruders, who came with such a letter of credence.

"I pray your pardon, noble lords;—had I known your rank, and that you were friends of my illustrious master, I should have received you with all honour and courtesy."

"Oh, think not of it, noble captain; you were at your devotions, doubtless, with that holy father; and we have rather to ask your pardon for disturbing them at so unseasonable an hour."

The captain cast a warning yet merry glance at the friar, who turned away from the company to conceal the laughter with which his fat sides were heaving, and the suppression of which almost choked him.

"We cannot sufficiently admire," resumed the younger stranger, "the efficient lieutenant, and her pretty *Aide-de-camp*, who performed duty in your absence. They reconnoitered and parleyed with us in true garrison style before we were admitted."

The captain now led the way to an inner apartment, where the care and activity of Christine had provided a well-covered board, to which the guests, nothing loath immediately applied themselves.

CHAPTER V.

"Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine,
Were not revenge sufficient for me;
And 'till I root out thine accursed name,
And leave not one alive, I live in Hell." SHAKESPEARE.

Rupert was still cowering in the wood, with eyes steadily fixed on the dark turret, whence the beacon of good or evil omen was to be displayed, when the castle bell tolled one. No light had yet gleamed from the well-known window, or rather loophole, which none but the eyes of a lover could have distinguished through the thick darkness, when he was suddenly startled by the sound of cautious steps and suppressed whispers near him, together with the crackling of the underwood as it gave way to those who were forcing a passage through it. But just at this moment, as he drew his sword, and was about to challenge the night walkers, the long expected light appeared and continued to burn steadily. As the safety of his father, in a great measure, depended upon the steady gleam of that taper, it for some moments absorbed all his attention, but when the continuance of its cheering ray had relieved his mind from that anxiety, his thoughts reverted to the immediate danger which threatened him, and he listened for the repeti-

tion of the sounds which had before alarmed him. A dead silence prevailed, yet the parties could not be far off, for his attention had been withdrawn but a few seconds. Presently a slight rustling of the bushes took place; but it was too dark to perceive the cause. Uncertain whether he himself were the object of his suspicious neighbours, without moving a step from his position, he kept the point of his weapon opposed to the direction of the sound, which again became perceptible and was accompanied by suppressed whispers, at this time nearer and more distinct, and the import of which consequently reached his ears.

"What means that light? They cannot have received information of our design. But why are these boors not here to meet us according to agreement?"

"Oh, the curse of St. Francis rest upon them, and upon thee for engaging them:—I doubt not but their brutal clumsiness will spoil our well-arranged plan."

"Nay, if your hot head must needs vent its spite, expend it on your own folly and thirst for revenge, which have instigated you to an enterprize like the present. I warn you, at any rate, not to make me the butt of your ill humour, although I am fool enough to take my risk in your wild scheme,"

"Wild scheme call you it? By my troth, but it is a magnificent scheme,—a glorious plot, big with the fate of princes; and, moreover, pregnant with revenge upon the usurping tyrant and his profligate son; upon the murderer of my father, and of—yours—yours! Think of that, and let it fire your blood to vengeance,—dark, deep, and bloody vengeance."

"I have not such a thirst for blood as you."

"But is there not also a brilliant chance of redeeming

our blighted honours, if we become the stepping stones, by which the young Earl ascends the throne of his fathers."

"Fine dreams, truly, for outlawed vagabonds, whose lives are at a price, and who can scarcely traverse this dark wood in safety from the arm of the law, which is hunting us down to our fate."

"What do you propose?"

"I care not."

"Will you not then second me in my enterprize?"

"You have my word. It is for you to lead,—fear not but that I shall follow."

"Well then,—let us rejoin our small band, and lead them at once to the assault. Every inmate of the Castle must now be at rest, and in the confusion of the surprise, we shall have an opportunity either to kill or carry off the boy."

"Hold!—you know the condition I made,—his life shall not be touched,"

"I remember." was the cold reply.

The two strangers now retreated in silence; and Rupert, who had gathered from their conversation that an immediate attack on the Castle was intended, impelled by anxiety for the safety of Christine, hastened directly to the Castle gate, roused the warder, and on his admission imparted to the captain and his guests what he had overheard. Whereupon arrangements were immediately made to give the assailants a warm reception.

About two o'clock the sentinels passed the word in a whisper, that they perceived the approach of the enemy whose proceedings showed that they considered their attack altogether unexpected, and that they should have no difficulty in carrying the fortress by surprise.

One of the party first swam across the moat, and returning with the skiff, some twenty others were soon ferried over, whereupon they proceeded to raise a tall ladder against the wall, where it was most accessible, and to climb up to the parapet. The first who thus adventured however slipped and fell, overthrowing three others who were on the ladder below. On examination he was found to be quite dead. After a pause of some seconds, to ascertain if the noise of this incident had alarmed the garrison, the attempt was resumed, but with no better result; for no sooner had another of the party raised his head above the coping, than he uttered a groan and fell over in like manner upon the dead body of his comrade.

The recurrence of this unlooked for event paralyzed for a moment, the courage of the rest, and whispers of doubt were passing between those on the ladder and those below, when simultaneously there appeared several heads above the wall with pointed arquebuses; and at the same moment, from a sally-port near them, issued a small party armed to the teeth, who taking them in rear, killed several, and drove the rest into the moat, in which several were shot, only two or three escaping to the other side, and taking shelter in the wood.

On reassembling in the hall, the sturdy old soldier, Briton, to whom this skirmish had proved quite exhilarating, because it vividly recalled to his memory the exciting scenes of his youth, loudly extolled the conduct of his noble guests; and they in their turn assigned all the honour of the affair to the courage and intelligence of Rupert.

"Truly, my lords, you speak but sooth, for I myself observed his alacrity and daring."

"Tell us, young man," continued the captain, "to whom we are so much indebted for the fortunate issue of this night's adventure."

All eyes turned upon Rupert, in expectation of his answer, but he who but a few minutes before had been so bold to encountre an armed foe, now shrunk abashed from the questions and scrutiny of those he had rendered so much his debtors.

"I am but a poor soldier of fortune, gentlemen," he at length stammered out, "whose name is not worthy of your remembrance, and who, if he has done you any service, begs only that you will allow him to depart unquestioned."

"Well, my brave boy," said Briton, "we will not strain our courtesy to unkindness, by asking you that you are unwilling to answer, but you must not quit the Royal Castle without some token of gratitude for your conduct on this occasion from him, who, however unworthy, now holds command here. Wherein can I serve you?—In purse, or person?"

"I am grateful for your kindness, Sir Captain, and if I do not task your liberality on the present occasion, it is not that I disdain your proffer, or indeed that I need it not; but I would reserve your promise for a future crisis, and doubt not but the time will come, when I shall ask you to redeem it."

"In all that consists with honour and fealty," said the captain, "I pledge you my word; in token whereof take this ring. The motto, as you see, is *Prêt à faire;* and so will you ever find me on presenting it, and demanding the fulfilment of my promise."

"Allow me also," said the younger nobleman, "to add my ring also, with my hearty thanks and admiration for

this night's service. I regret that your circumstances should require secresy, and compel your immediate departure, as we should have much pleasure in commending so gallant and hopeful a young soldier to the notice of the King. But since that may not be, and in these turbulent times we cannot always command the beck of fortune, should you ever be in extremity, whatever the circumstances, forward this ring to the lord Neville, in the train of the Prince Henry, and doubt not but it will bestead you at your utmost need."

"Gratefully do I accept your valuable signet, my lord; and should fortune press me so hard as you suppose, I will try the magic of its power, nothing doubting its infallibility."

This the youth said, as he received the ring, with a profound obeisance to the donor. Then turning to the ladies, who stood near, he said with a smile, "May I presume to solicit a friendly token from the fair chatelans also, a favour from whom will indeed make me a proud soldier, and give me cause to glory in my knightly achievements."

The lady Rosabel immediately presented him with a jewelled cross, at the same time invoking the benison of our Blessed Lady upon his head. The blushing and trembling Christine drew from her finger a small ring set with rubies, which, with a furtive smile, she presented, requesting him to keep it in remembrance of her, until her father redeemed his promise. Whereupon Rupert, with his blushing honours thus thick upon him, made farewell bow and departed.

CHAPTER VI.

"Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one." SHAKESPEARE.

On the morning following the events detailed in the previous chapter, notwithstanding the broken rest of the previous night, Rosabel rose early, and pensively took her station at a window, which commanded a view of the eastern horizon, and of the pilgrims' camp. The latter was already instinct with life and motion, but the mind of the fair spectator was so absorbed in its own thoughts, that her eyes wandered over the extensive prospect without noting its beauties. The freshness of the morning air, which breathed through the lattice, gave a slight rose tint to her delicate complexion, and in some measure communicated its cheering influence to the tone of her meditations, which were wholly fixed upon the occurrences of the preceding evening.

The peculiar circumstances under which the strangers had arrived, their cavalier bearing, and the dangerous afterpiece of the mysterious attack, all tended to give an interest and importance to their arrival, which it would not otherwise have commanded. Of their persons and features she had but an indistinct impression, mixed up with hurried thoughts of their first admission, their familiar salutation, and subsequent interview with the

captain ;—that impression was however highly pleasing, and she looked forward with a fluttering heart to their appearance at the breakfast table, which on this occasion had been prepared in the Spanish chamber.

Thus abstracted in mind, her cheek resting upon her hand, and reclining on the sill of the window, she was startled by the voice of some one behind her.

" A fair good morrow to my beautiful hostess."

She turned quickly round, and with a deep blush and a profound courtesy, returned the salute of the elder stranger, lord Lacey, who now stood before her. He was a fine young man of about twenty, with a handsome and manly countenance, and of a bold and easy carriage, far beyond his years, and acquired by habits of command, to which his rank and station had accustomed him.

" I fear, gentle lady, my sudden appearance has alarmed you, and I humbly crave your pardon."

" 'Twas but a momentary surprise, my lord, and therefore requires no apology."

The ready address of lord Lacey quickly dispelled the awkwardness of this introduction, and by slow and almost imperceptible degrees their conversation assumed a more animated tone ; the gentleman introducing into his discourse many figures of speech which savoured more of gallantry than of ordinary courtesy, and the lady listening with modest yet not ungratified reserve. In short their conference was as pretty and pleasant an affair as could possibly have been got up on so short an acquaintance, and was still in its full piquancy, when it was suddenly broken off by a scuffle and a scream in the ante-room, and the hasty entrance of Christine, closely followed by my lord Nevil.

This young gentleman, who was considerably younger than his companion, was tall, well proportioned, and of a fair countenance, with a bright quick eye,—the whole contour being highly agreeable, though somewhat dashed with the air of a *roué*, and slightly disfigured by a recent wound on the left cheek.

"Stay, my beautiful little sylph;" shouted he, "Why will you fly from me thus? See me at your feet, and say, does this look like the insolent presumption you charge me with."

"I hate and despise you:" replied the enraged girl. "You are neither lord nor gentleman, to treat a lady thus, but, I doubt not, some saucy groom, who having stolen his master's doublet, knows not how to assume manners suitable to the garb in which he is disguised."

"Nay, nay, my sweet bonny belle, accuse me not so bitterly, for I here vow myself your true knight, and I trust, '*sans tache et sans peur*.' I only wished to pay you the fraternal salutations of the morning."

"Your fraternal salutations appear to be for all seasons, night as well as morning; but, my lord, you will do well to seek some other recipient of your favours, for I desire them not. Were you the prince himself, I would not put up with your insolent familiarity; though, as coming under the king's recommendation, I am desirous of paying you all becoming courtesy."

"Bravely spoken, my bright eyed queen of hearts. You cannot think how beautiful you look, when you are angry."

"My lord,—my gracious lord," said Lacey, in a deferential, yet deprecatory tone, "let me pray you to consider what is due to the roof-tree of a royal Castle, and to

those that command therein.—Bethink you also, what is becoming of yourself and your father's son."

"I am wrong,—I am wrong," said the youth, "and I cry you mercy, sweet lady. Yet allow me, I pray you, to be your most obedient slave,—your foot-page, —nay, your most menial knave; and I shall deem myself in a high and honourable post, if you will bestow upon me, occasionally, in guerdon of my service, one of those roguish and bewitching smiles, which now and then light up your merry face, and tell of a heart in that fair bosom overflowing with love and feeling,—a treasure worth a diadem."

"Peace, peace, my good lord," said Lacey, "you will alarm the young lady by your madness."

"Oh no, my lord, he does not alarm me;" retorted Christine, "I am only surprised at his impudence, in presuming to talk in such a strain with his baby's face, on which there is not yet a single hair to swear by."

"By my fai', Nevil, but she has you there," said Lacey.

"'Tis fair warfare," resumed the youth," so I may as well make the most of my smock face, and say, at least she cannot take me by the beard."

During the latter part of this playful contention, Dame Moreton entered the apartment. She had contrived to quit the Castle the evening before, notwithstanding the prohibition of the seneschal, and, having spent the night in the village with some of her gossips, was totally unacquainted with the occurrences which had fallen out during her absence. Surprise at seeing such unwonted guests in the usually deserted chamber, at first kept her speechless, and she turned her bewildered gaze rapidly

from one party to another, until it became suddenly fixed, as if by magic, upon the features of the laughing young nobleman, who was on his knees at the feet of Christine: and, after devouring him as it were with her eyes, she exclaimed vehemently, "It is,—it must be—my royal—my princely nursling!" And thus saying, she threw her arms round the neck of the astonished young man, and covered his face with her kisses. So utterly was he confounded by this sudden assault, that it was some seconds before he could recover his position, and shake off the unwelcome embraces of the ancient dame; but when at last released, the blushing youth, with a somewhat clouded brow, which the undisguised laughter of Lacey and the ladies did not tend to smooth, turned to the old lady, and requested to know why he was so highly favoured with the tokens of her affection, she was on her knees before him, humbly imploring his pardon for the liberty she had taken, and calling him—"her royal babe!—her princely fondling!—her glorious lord and master!"—evidently supposing him to be no other than the king himself, her former nursling. And the young ladies, gleaning from her exclamations the cause of her strange conduct, said, "Why, nurse,—dame Moreton, you must be mistaken:—this is not the king;—this is lord Nevil."

"Lord Nevil!—lord Nevil!—do you say?" shrieked the still agitated nurse: "Tell me not of lords, or of dukes;—do you think I have forgotten the features of the child of my bosom. Look at him;—there he stands in all his noble beauty, as when he last visited the Castle, twenty years ago come next candlemas!"

"But this gentleman, nurse, can scarcely be twenty

years of age :" said Christine, "at any rate he is not come to years of discretion."

This self-evident fact rather shook the old lady's confidence in her position; and she again approached the young gentleman, with eyes of doubt and enquiry: but here lord Lacey interposed, saying, "You are correct, good nurse, in your recognition of the striking similarity of feature between my friend and the king, which is indeed extraordinary, and has been frequently observed by others. In fact, Nevil, I believe you boast of some distant relationship to his majesty, which may in part account for the resemblance."

Still the dame was not satisfied, and it was long before she gave up her point, her eyes constantly following every motion of the supposed king, whose image seemed to have been stored up in her heart of hearts.

The arrival of the captain and father Philip caused the whole party at once to adjourn to the breakfast table, and the meal passed off pleasantly enough, with much cheerful chat and many merry jibes, principally directed against the venerable nurse, but the good old lady was so fully possessed by her own thoughts, and the contemplation of the object of them, that she seemed deaf to all that was said. No sooner was the meal over than the ladies dispersed to their household avocations, and the captain, commending his guests to the conversation of the chaplain, was about to follow their example, when a letter was put into his hand, which had just arrived by a special messenger from the governor, Sir Owen Tudor.

In this epistle the good knight informed his lieutenant, that he had accidentally learnt, the day before, that Prince Henry was about to visit Bolingbroke Castle, with what

object he could not discover; but that as the manners of the young prince, and his associates, were generally dissolute, the careful father directed the captain immediately to send his daughter Rosabel and her companion Christine to the house of his sister, the lady Isabel Bohun, at Gishour's Hall, Boston; there to remain until his return from the north with the king. The letter went on to say that he had not been able to discover the precise time of the threatened visit, nor who were to be the companions of the royal scape-grace, but that Thomas Fitz-Allan, the Earl of Surrey, was certainly one of them, a young man of much better character than those who were generally honoured with the prince's friendship.

No sooner had the captain possessed himself of the contents of this important dispatch, than he addressed his guests as follows, "My lords, I suppose you can guess the subject of my letter, which informs me that the prince himself is about to honour the Royal Castle of Bolingbroke with his presence, and you, gentlemen, I presume, form his advanced guard,—his *avant-couriers*. Pray, when may I expect his royal highness, and how many persons form his *suite?* for it is so long since we were honoured with visitors of high rank, that our accommodation is but scanty, and I must prepare accordingly."

"You divine the matter sagely, captain," said Lacey. "The prince will be here perhaps in a day or two, but do not make any extraordinary preparation, for his highness travels *incog.*, dislikes ceremony, and will probably be attended by only one or two confidential adherents."

"If I may make so bold," rejoined the captain, "has he the jolly old knight, Sir John Falstaff, in his train?"

"What! hast heard of fat Jack even in this remote part of the realm?"

"Aye, truly, my lord; and men say he is in high favour with the prince, although the king likes him not."

"The jolly knight is commissioned to hunt up corn, wine, and hay, from the fat burghers of Boston, and to see them dispatched for the king's service to Tynemouth; and if he should hear that the prince is at Bolingbroke, he will probably leave the king's commission to take care of itself, and hasten hither to join us, when he will be most happy to assist you and the holy friar in your devotions."

"Let me pray your lordship's pardon and silence on that head," entreated the captain, "or you may do me much harm with the prince and his royal father, of whose house I have been a faithful follower from my childhood."

Thus saying he quitted the room, and the two young noblemen shortly after mounted their horses, and rode over to Spilsby, promising to return by noon.

CHAPTER VII.

"Who lets his wife abroad with pilgrims roam,
Deserves a fool's cap, and long ears at home."

CHAUCER.

No sooner had his guests departed, than Simon called a council of the ladies, and informed them, that in consequence of an order from Sir Owen, the lady Rosabel was to proceed forthwith to Boston, and there to remain with her aunt Isabel until his return from the north; and moreover that Christine and dame Moreton were to accompany her. He further stated his wish that they should be prepared for the journey in half an hour:—at which there was a general up-lifting of hands, and exclamations implying the impossibility of having all the requisite paraphernalia ready on so short a notice; but as the old gentleman was absolute, they were compelled to submit, and in about an hour had mustered in the court yard, equipped for riding, and being mounted on good mules, with a guard of six men-at-arms under the orders of a halberdier, took the road to Boston at a round trot.

Rosabel with regret left the handsome lord Lacey behind, and wondered if she should ever see him again:

while Christine lamented the untimely removal as most unfortunate, and anxiously bethought herself of the dangers that threatened her gallant lover and his wounded father. As for dame Moreton, she was overjoyed at the prospect of rejoining cousin Jerry, and the merry pilgrims, and tattled away with childlike delight, whilst the two young maidens rode in silence by her side, fully occupied by their own reflections. What would have been the train of their thoughts, had they known of the expected arrival, the captain, by his prudent silence, prevents the necessity of enquiring.

Being well mounted they rode rapidly on, and soon came up with the rear stragglers of the company of pilgrims, and at Sibsey overtook the main body, who hailed their appearance with shouts of welcome; and at dame Moreton's earnest request the rate of travelling was shortened to that of the godly company they had now joined.

At Sibsey they stopped to dine, and during dinner a company of mummers performed the "Mystery of the Ass," to the infinite delight of the spectators. In this performance was introduced a wooden ass enclosing a man, upon which mounted Balaam, equipped with an immense pair of spurs, and otherwise dressed in most farcical style. An angel, personated by one of the fair pilgrims, appeared on the road, whom the ass refused to pass, and was in consequence most unmercifully beaten, to escape the continuance of which the poor animal at last spoke, to the great satisfaction of the hearers. Whereupon the hitherto despised ass rose into sudden estimation, and was led in grand procession, followed by the whole assembly, uttering one universal bray, so that it

might have been supposed that the assumption of speech by the long-eared brute, had deprived the two-legged animals of their ordinary mode of utterance, and had communicated in return the asinine power of braying alone. The very geese hissed at the tumultuous mob as they passed along.

From the conclusion of this farce, until it entered Boston, the procession appeared to consist rather of Bacchanals than of holy pilgrims ; for such was the feeling of the age that the utmost licentiousness was permissible on these occasions, under the name and guise of religion.

The escort of the lady Rosabel and her party, in the general confusion and licence that surrounded them, soon forgot their duty, and left their charge exposed to the ruffianly insults of any pot-valiant jacks, who could muster courage enough to address their ribaldry to ladies so much their superiors. Some of these they rebutted with contemptuous silence, which drove them away to seek more complaisant objects for their pastime; but two fellows in masks, whose language and bearing shewed them not to belong to the ordinary class amongst which they herded, were not so easily dismissed, but pressed their attentions with a pertinacity and officiousness, which would take no repulse, so that the young ladies became seriously alarmed ; when another mask, who had recently kept close to them, suddenly stepped in between Christine and her tormentor, with a bold and manly "Stand back fellow."

The party thus unceremoniously addressed, staggered back a pace or two, and then all at once recovering himself, drew a dagger from his belt, and slashed it across the

face of the intruder, with the intention of blinding him, but his adversary was on the alert, and striking the weapon up with one hand, dealt him a blow with the other, which threw him prostrate amongst the horses' feet, where he left him to recover himself as he best could.

A whisper from her protector reassured the terrified Christine, who with a smiling countenance communicated the information she had received to Rosabel, whose persecutor had also disappeared, probably to look after his fallen comrade.

An earnest conversation ensued between Christine and her new chaperon, and it was remarked, that from the moment he took his place at her side the hitherto sad and anxious expression of her countenance, had been changed for one of the most happy and joyous that a beautiful face can assume.

As they drew near to the good town of Boston, the truant escort resumed their station, the old halberdier loudly upbraiding his men with their dereliction of duty, and fiercely asseverating the trouble he had had to bring them back to their post, in which occupation he would have had it inferred he had been all the time busily engaged, though his twinkling eye and purple face told a different tale.

On their arrival at the Strait Bar Gate, the friendly mask bade them farewell, and the men-at-arms were compelled to draw up on one side, not being permitted to enter without the permission of the High Bailiff of the Town, but the ladies proceeded with one attendant to Gishour's Hall, the residence of lady Isabel Bohun, who joyfully welcomed her niece and her attendants to her house.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Nothing there grew beneath the sky,
But willows scarcely six feet high;
And those of only one year's crop
The floods did fairly overtop." HALL.

The evening that succeeded the day of commotion described in the foregoing chapter, closed in with clouds and darkness before the last stragglers of the company reached Boston.

The only road which traversed the West Fen, in the times of which we write, was a straight, but very uneven causeway, distinguishable from the surrounding marsh by rows of willows, which skirted it on either side, but in other respects exactly the same, being for the most part covered with water, and in places rendered quite impassable by deep sloughs of quick swamp, large enough to swallow a whole troop of horse. These necessarily occasioned the way-farer to quit the marked track, and to pick his way through the adjoining bog and quag-mire, which were almost as dangerous as the quaking swamp he sought to avoid. Hence strangers were compelled to employ, as guides, the native fen-men, to whom alone these devious paths were known.

It was late on the night in question, when a portly horseman, on a fine charger, followed by a young page mounted on a spirited jennet, rode slowly along the dark and dismal causeway between Stickney and Sibsey, under the guidance of one of the amphibious beings before mentioned, who plodded on before them, in sullen silence, through mud and water, never pausing to answer any of the numerous queries addressed to him.

The forlorn traveller, very ill at ease, though disliking the route, and doubtful of the honesty of his guide, still followed in his steps, for nothing appeared so much to be dreaded as the alternative of being left alone to find his way out of the labyrinth of dangers by which his path was now beset. Thus then did they wade on through increasing difficulties, until they came to what appeared an impassable lake of dark water, the boundaries of which the eye in vain sought for through the dense fog that hung over it. Here the guide stopped, and said,

"You must dismount, and let me lead your horses across this piece of water, or both you and they will be lost in the bog."

"Is there no other road?"

"None."

"I would rather retrace the one we have come, than quit my horse."

"You can please yourself; but I shall not return to night." And the fellow thereupon directed his steps across the surface of the lake, and was presently lost in the mist that hung over it.

On seeing himself thus deserted, the sense of his helpless condition and perilous situation, pressed so strongly upon the mind of our traveller, that he recalled his guide

in accents of earnest entreaty, and loudly proclaimed his willingness to follow his directions. After an anxious pause of some minutes, the splash of approaching feet gave token of his return, and the same grim figure emerged from the gloom, and took his station at the horse's head.

"Are you willing to dismount?"

"Can you not lead the horse with me upon him?"

"Yes, if you are content to be smothered with your beast."

Slowly, and most unwillingly, did he lower his rotund person from the back of his trusty steed; which he had no sooner done than he sunk up to his knees in mire, and, with a woeful aspect, watched the receding form of his only hope and stay, his good horse.

"The black thief shall not have my jennet, Sir John;" said the shrill voice of the young page, "for I think he intends to play us false."

"I fear you are right, Walter;—I already regret the loss of Bucephalus."

By this time the guide had reappeared; and the page shouted to him, "You shall not carry off my horse, bully black; so keep your distance, or beware my dudgeon."

"We will presently see that," roared the fen-man in reply, and seizing the horse by the bridle, he made it plunge suddenly forward into the pool, the boy nevertheless sticking to his beast as if he were a part of it, and striking fiercely at his assailant with his dagger, until the latter, raising his staff, knocked the poor page from his seat, and left him apparently dead on the surface of the marsh. He was however only stunned, and

after a second or two, rose from his 'oozy bed,' shook a shower of black water from his garments, and made his way to where his unhappy master still stuck fast in the mud; and who in doleful accents addressed him thus, "Gog's wounds, boy;—we are in a woeful plight, for the villain has left us to our fate. Can you see no light?—no sign of civilized man, or of brute beast?"

"None save yourself, Sir John;" said the boy. "I can scarcely see mine hand; and the only sound I can hear, is the thorough bass of the Lincolnshire bagpipes, the dismal croaking of myriads of frogs and toads, that seem to make merry at our distress, and to enjoy by anticipation the banquet of picking our bones, of which they have a fair prospect."

"Alas! and alas!" cried Sir John, "I will assuredly turn shaveling, repent of my sins, and fast, if it be only to reduce my enormous bulk, which is ever bringing me into these disastrous predicaments."

The waggish boy, though shivering in his drenched garb, was so much tickled at the idea of his master's proposed reformation, that he laughed out-right, and began to chaunt the old popish saw,

"When the devil was ill,
The devil a monk would be;
When the devil got well,
The devil a monk was he."

"Thou imp of Satan," roared the infuriated knight, violently struggling to extricate himself, "darest thou sport thy doggerel wit at my expense. An I catch thee, I will crush thy pernicious carcase, as I would a viper on my path." And such energy did passion give to his exertions, that, with the loss of his boots, he succeeded in releasing his legs from one quagmire, but, unfortunately,

only to plunge himself deeper into another; for in his eagerness to seize his saucy page, his foot slipped and he rolled over and over into the slimy lake, from which the boy had so recently escaped.

"Help, help, my dear Walter," spluttered he, "or I shall be suffocated in this sink of abominations."

"But now you threatened to annihilate me, and how do I know that you will not try to smother me in the mud? You must get out as you best can;—I should have lain long 'ere you would have moved a foot to help me."

"Oh, knave, knave;—hast thou no bowels for thy dying master?"

"Nay, good sir, thou hast enough of thine own;—certainly thou hast no claim upon those of another."

"Sayest thou, mongrel cur?—have I fed and pampered thee, until thou crackest thy jibes upon me at my utmost need? An I survive this hour, I will brain thee for this."

"Nay then, if that is to be the meed of my faithful services, I will e'en bid thee farewell at once."

"Nay, my good goblin, for I must still believe thee of the order infernal, leave not thy kind, noble and generous master, to perish in this detestable bog, to be stifled with ditch-water, and to be serenaded to the death by a general convocation of frogs, assembled expressly to consume him."

"'Tis a melancholy idea, indeed, Sir John; and yet they will have a rare feast." And the incorrigible boy again indulged in a loud laugh at his master's expense.

"A plague upon your mirth say I. Come hither, and lend me your hand to extricate me from the black gulph into which I am fast sinking."

"You must pardon me, Sir John:—I could not pull you out, and you certainly would pull me in, if it were only for fellowship."

"But, my dear boy, I am positively perishing amid the stench of this stagnant water, (faugh!) which flows within an inch of my nose."

"It has but an indifferent flavour of sack, Sir John, which, I fear me, you will never taste again."

"Oh madness!—why talk of nectar, when I am labouring under a surfeit of this hell-broth?"

All this time, the fat knight, whose huge corporation resembled an inflated bladder in buoyancy, as well as in form, was rolling about on the surface of the pool, to his own sore discomposure, and to the utter dismay of a large colony of frogs, whose domains had not been so rudely invaded before in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. But this state of things was not destined to continue long, for both master and man, or rather boy, were both alarmed by the sudden appearance of some half dozen tall and terrible figures, advancing with giant strides towards them,—demons apparently of the grenadier order, for they stood at least ten or twelve feet high, and the fears of our benighted wanderers magnified their stature to the clouds. An attendant company of inferior fiends, not so tall, but of broader dimensions, also appeared at the same moment, and together they surrounded the appalled knight and trembling boy.

By the agency of these Spirits of the Fens, Sir John presently found himself standing on *terra firma*, and surrounded, to his great surprise, by beings of the size and form of ordinary men; for the tall had descended from their stilts, and the broad had with equal prompti-

tude reduced their bulk, by casting from their backs the corracles, or small skiffs, which were in general use amongst the fen-men in traversing the watery plains. These small boats were used only to cross deep gullies, or large stagnant pools, and were at other times carried by the owners on their backs, by means of a broad band secured to the thwart or seat, and passing over the forehead.

The utter helplessness of the unwieldly being they had dragged out of the bog, his pitiful and dismal moans, and his ridiculous plight, excited the hearty laugh even of these phlegmatic sons of the marsh and the fen, and they capered round him in the excess of their mirth like so many demons; the *finale* of their sport seeming sufficiently doubtful to justify the rueful aspect with which Sir John and his page watched their motions. When this extraordinary ebullition of feeling had subsided, a brief parley took place between two or three of those who appeared to have the ascendancy, at the conclusion of which the passive captives were each seized by a couple of their uncouth friends, and hurried along at a rapid race; some of the party following in the rear, and probing the unhappy Sir John with their stilts every time his pace slackened, for locomotion on foot was to him a very painful process, beyond the speed of a snail, and even that he always declined if possible. These sportive attacks upon the person of the laggard knight, were sometimes so rude as to cause him to utter exclamations of pain, which always elicited bursts of uproarious laughter from his savage escort; and the consequence was, that four horsemen, who came full gallop along the road, were upon them before their approach was perceived.

"Hallo!—what have we here?" shouted one of the cavaliers, as the fen-men drew up across the road, and with their long staves presented a formidable barrier to the further progress of our travellers.

"Hallo!—what have we here?" shouted the same voice. "Robbers and highwaymen? Make way, fellows, or we ride you down. Now, Fitz-Allan;—together,—down with them."

But at this moment the speaker's horse started on one side, and a feeble voice, proceeding from a shapeless mass, which lay in the middle of the road, exclaimed, "Mercy, mercy;—kill me not, for our lady's sake:—I am a poor old sinner, unprepared to die!"

"What mummery is this?" said the same speaker. "But surely I should know that voice!"

The apparition rose from the earth, and in tones of exultation, exclaimed, "What, my noble master!—my princely Hal!—Is it possible?—Now joy be wi' us!—Brutus is himself again!" Then turning to the fen-men, he bellowed, "Down, dogs, upon your knees, and beg your lives;—worship the true prince, or ye are but dead men. For myself, I bear no malice, though I cannot commend your courtesy; for ye have done but scant honour to my knighthood."

The boors were at first but little disposed to 'worship the true prince;' but, on perceiving that their opponents were well armed, and that one of their old associates, now a retainer of the Castle of Bolingbroke, was of the party, they ceased to present an hostile front, and after an exchange of friendly greetings, the whole company adjourned to a hut in the fen, near the place of meeting.

This lone retreat in the watery wilderness, surrounded on all sides by luxuriant willows, which protected it from the chilling blasts that swept over the desolate plain, was like an oasis in the desert, and abounded in every thing that could comfort the body and cheer the heart of the weary traveller. A splendid fire sparkled upon the spacious hearth, and savoury viands, reeking from the pot, smoked upon the board;—how welcome to the bedraggled knight and his luckless page may be well conceived. Nor were the other nocturnal travellers displeased to find themselves so securely sheltered from the storm that now raged without, for the walls, wattled with willows, and lined with mud, and the roof well thatched with reeds, excluded every breath of wind, whilst the smooth floor, a compost of mud and reeds, well covered with dry rushes, afforded a warm resting place for the damp and weary feet, or a comfortable bed for those that were disposed to slumber. The party now met together, after satiating themselves with venison, drank sherris, Bourdeaux, and sack, until, amidst the general roar of noisy mirth and jovial songs, both prince and peasant sunk, a heterogeneous mass, amongst the rushes, where for the present we will leave them.

CHAPTER IX.

"No penny, no pater-noster." PROVERB.

The young lords, on their return from Spilsby, were accompanied by two servants, whom they had left in that town the day before, with their valises, to await their further orders; for, not expecting to find any amusement at the secluded Castle of Bolingbroke, they had determined on the morrow to pursue their route northward, and, rejoin the army. The discovery however of two charming young ladies, where they had promised themselves but a dull sojourn, at once dispelled all aspirations for glory in the field of Mars, and induced them, heart and soul, to enter that of Venus, and her bow-bearing son.

What then were their surprise and chagrin, to find the birds of beauty flown in their absence, may be easily conceived. Utterly baffled, and almost maddened at their disappointment, they applied to Simon Briton for explanation, but could extract no other reply from him, than that he acted under the orders of his superior officer, which enjoined silence as to the destination of the young ladies, as well as his duty in dispatching them thither.

For such mercurial beings to sit down quietly under these circumstances, was of course impossible, and every engine in their power was consequently set to work to

find the retreat of the fair fugitives, which, towards the fall of the day, was effected by bribing one of the jack men to extort the secret from a favourite waiting maid of the lady Rosabel. This fellow was also persuaded by a similar argument to accompany, and guide them through the fens to Boston, whither the impetuosity of the young men induced them to proceed immediately, although the lowering sky promised a stormy night and an unpleasant journey; and they started forthwith at a rapid pace, without even bidding their host farewell. We have however already seen that their speed was not such as to carry them to Boston that night.

On being aroused the next morning from their heavy slumbers in the fen-man's hut, their ideas were still so confused by the effects of the over-night's debauch, that they were utterly at a loss to account for their strange situation, until the well known voice of Sir John Falstaff recalled to their minds the occurrences of the previous evening.

The good knight was boasting, in "King Cambyses' strain," amidst a savage group of fen-men, round a huge wood fire, of his own power and influence at court, and of the wonderful feats he had performed at the battle of Shrewsbury, where, if he were to be believed, nobody could stand before him, and all the principal persons that fell, were slain by his hand. This rodomontade was somewhat helped out by the account the jack-man gave of the gentlemen he had accompanied from Bolingbroke, for it was generally known in the garrison, that they came with credentials from the king, and inasmuch as the fat knight was certainly a friend of theirs, he might also be a man of importance. Sir John had how-

ever been warned by Lacey not to be too communicative to the boors, as it might be attended with evil consequences. Yet such is the unaccountable nature of the impulses of untutored man, that although these wild young noblemen, and the stout old knight, were entirely in their power, the fen-men, who were robbers and murderers of the most implacable order, felt such a regard for the gallantry, spirit, and reckless humour of their distinguished pot companions, that no thought of injuring them ever entered their minds; and they thus let slip a prize far superior to many for which they had often risked life and limb. This good feeling extended even to the restoration of the horses of Sir John and his page, and the whole party were thus enabled to resume their journey together, after another hearty meal of wine and venison.

Sir John, when led astray by his treacherous guide, was, as he supposed, on the road from Horncastle to St. Botolph's, to execute the king's commission, and little expected to encounter, at such a time and place, the boon companions of his merry hours in East Cheap.

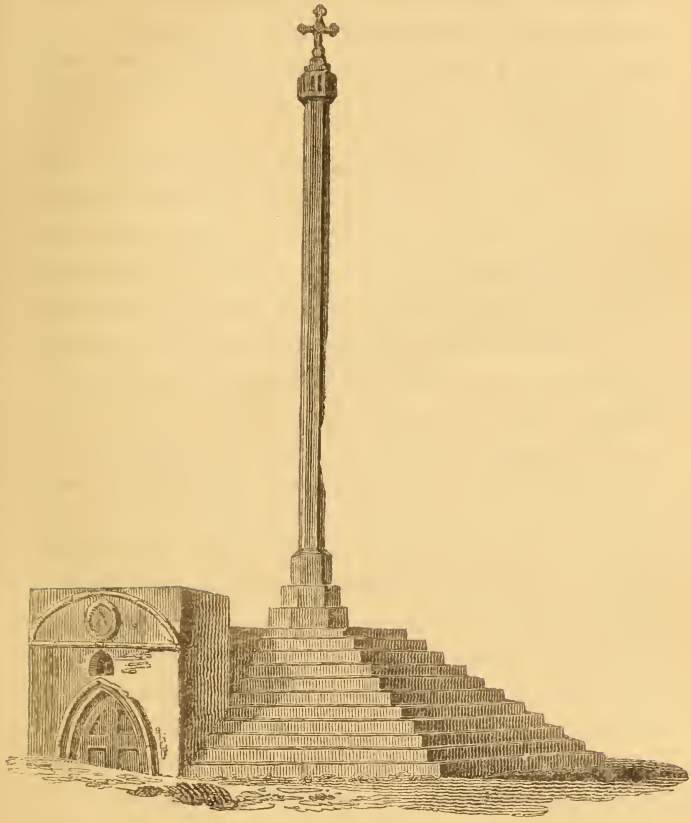
A short hour brought the party to Boston, where, after changing their disordered garments for others of a richer and more comely order, at the hostel of Robin Grey, inside the Bar Gate, they proceeded in search of Gishour's Hall, trusting to their own assurance for an introduction to the good old lady Bohun. Their progress was however soon obstructed by an immense concourse of people, assembled to witness the processions of the different religious orders and guilds, which were then taking place.

The fairs and great marts of Boston, which brought vast bodies of people together, not only from the neigh

bourhood and surrounding counties, but also from the remotest parts of the kingdom, and even from the continent, were also remarkable for the religious ceremonies and solemn processions, which always took place on these occasions, and in which the different orders of ecclesiastics vied with each other by every holy artifice to attract the reverential regard, and consequent liberality, of the superstitious multitude towards themselves, their saints, and monasteries. The consequence was that the bright sun, which rose upon the assembled thousands that thronged the narrow streets of the old town,—and be it remembered that numerous bodies of visitors, similar to the one we have described, had entered Boston by every approach,—that bright luminary, I say, which communicated a portion of its own brightness to every individual it shone upon, also lit on their way black trains of monks and friars, parading their images, relics, and sacred symbols, to catch the eye, and excite the devotional sympathies of the admiring populace.

Golden crucifixes, splendid chalices, and embossed pixes, glittering all over with precious stones, proofs of the generous devotion of wealthy sinners in past times, were held up as models, worthy the imitation of new proselytes.

In the centre of the market place stood a lofty and ancient Cross, around which, as the place of the greatest resort, and consequently the best calculated for display, each procession took its slow and imposing march, to the chaunt of some holy anthem, gradually increasing in numbers as it moved along, by the accession of all the votaries of the particular order to which it belonged.



The first of these trains, that 'dragged its slow length along,' was that of the Austin Friars, or Black Eremites, from their Friary in South End, near St. John's Church. [a] The severe aspect of the monks forming this procession, whose eyes wandered not either to the right or the left, but were kept steadily bent upon the

a The ground on which the Union Workhouse now stands. PRINTER'S DEVIL.

earth, as if their minds were wholly abstracted from the vanities that surrounded them, found admirers in the more ascetic portion of the mob, and they were consequently followed back to their priory by a moderate number of fair-going devotees.

The next procession consisted of Carmelites,[a] originally a modification of the former order, but differing now both in discipline and dress, for they wore white robes, with scapularies of brown cloth thrown over the shoulders. Their house was much frequented on account of a celebrated image of the Virgin, which was known throughout the country for the miracles wrought by its agency.

These again were followed by the Dominicans,[b] or Preaching Friars, in black cassock and rochet, a numerous, but quarrelsome, and malignant race of men, ever in fierce contention with the other orders. Their general portliness and obese countenances, gave ample token of their propensity to indulge in the good things of this life, however strenuously they might preach temperance to their brother sinners. A spirit of envy, and a disposition to quarrel and intrigue, fully entitled the members of this order to their ordinary appellation of "black monks."

The Franciscans,[c] or Grey Friars, next made their

a The Carmelite Priory, with its various buildings and gardens, extended over a considerable space of ground; one front was in High Street, reaching from Doughty's Quay to Liquorpond Street; another front was in West Street, nearly opposite to Lawrence Lane.
THOMPSON'S HIST. OF BOSTON.

b The site of the Dominican Friary was in South Street, between Sibsey Lane and Custom-House Lane.
IBID.

c The Franciscan Friary was situated in the south east part of Boston, and extended over the gardens behind the Grammar School.
IBID.

appearance, and many smiles of the young and fair welcomed their approach, and exchanged greetings with the jolly monks, whose merry faces displayed but few signs of fasting and self denial, although their bare feet, coarse grey frock, and the thick knotted rope which formed their girdle, betokened the severity of the primitive regulations of the order.

The Grey Friars were celebrated for the performance of Mysteries, or Corpus Christi Plays, an amusement in great vogue amongst all classes, and one which consequently made the actors in it general favorites.

Several minor processions succeeded, consisting of small fraternities, that were mere appendages to other houses, connected with one of the foregoing orders. The most conspicuous of these was that of the Brethren of St. Botolph, which was followed by all the mariners of the port, for St. Botolph was always considered the sailors' friend, and the beacon fire, which shone nightly from the beautiful lantern of his lofty steeple, had saved the lives of many of those who now gratefully attended to do him honour.

Such spectacles as these, at all times most attractive, were at this festive season especially so, and consequently all the inhabitants, as well as strangers, who could escape from business, thronged the avenues through which the processions took their way. The High Bailiff, with a few of the principal personages of the town, had taken their station on the platform and steps, at the foot of the cross, from which they commanded a view of the whole ceremony, and amongst the ladies, thus conspicuously placed, our two gallants presently recognized the fair Rosabel and her friend Christine, surrounded by other ladies of rank and figure.

Their impatience soon enabled them to force a way through the crowd, but not without many curses and sneers at the Popinjay Jacks, from those they so rudely elbowed. But heedless of every thing but the immediate objects which attracted them, the young men pressed on until they reached the outer line of the Dominican train, which was then parading round the cross, and receiving the salutations of the *magnates* there assembled.

Regardless alike of the reverence due to the Holy Brotherhood, and of the respect they owed to the chief magistrate, in this, the high place, and high day, of his dignity, the reckless young men dashed through the line of march, upsetting one gouty old friar, and discomfiting some half dozen more, at the very moment, when they thought they were looking most edifyingly holy, and devout; and also inflicting a deep wound on the pride of the worthy High Bailiff himself by such a flagrant breach of the peace in his very presence. Their irruption was also accompanied by a violent out-break of public feeling against them, in which those they had jostled in their passage through the mob were most vehement.

"Down with the sacrilegious dogs! Away with them to the river, and cool their pride in the Witham.—Their fine feathers shall not save them from the horse-pond."

Without noticing the commotion their thoughtless conduct had excited, the two young men were already in the midst of the ladies, and paying their respects with all the warmth and animation, which the excitement of their pursuit had naturally engendered. But the evident indifference to the displeasure of the multitude, which their conduct evinced, so excited the bile of that many-

headed monster, that the uproar now became tremendous, and, the processions having passed on, the mob closed round, and with terrific yells threatened vengeance on the offenders.

The rush of the infuriated populace, which seemed likely in its inconsiderate wrath to trample down the ladies in its attempt to seize the delinquents, was suddenly arrested by a body of the High Bailiff's officers, who, with their halberts beat back the more turbulent of the rioters, and formed a kind of *cordon sanataire* round the cross, and those assembled at its foot; and at the same time, the magistrate himself directed his chief constable to capture the bodies of the insolent causes of the disturbance, and to bring them before him immediately, in his court of piepoudre.

The sight of the culprits being led away under charge of the proper officers, at once appeased the multitude; and the many claims, which the different chapmen, buffoons, and others, made upon their attention, quickly drew away their thoughts to other subjects. But we must not so easily forget the important personages of our history, but follow them to the tumultuous court, in which they now stand arraigned.

Here it was likely to go hard with them, for the court and its advisers, seemed very much disposed to commit the peace-breakers to the comforts of a dungeon till the fair was over, which would last some twenty days to come. From this fate they were however saved by the timely appearance of Sir John Falstaff, who, breathless with haste, and "larding the lean earth" with the perspiration, his laborious passage through the throng had thrown him into, presented his red face and rotund form before

the civic dignitary, and in a voice of majesty, addressed the bench.

"Mr. Bailiff, before you decide upon the case now before you, allow me to speak in behalf of the gentlemen at the bar. This will at once inform you who I am."

So saying, he handed to the magistrate his commission, and during its perusal, with his arms folded on his ample chest, looked round upon the expecting audience with a complaisant smile of self-satisfied importance. Nor was he disappointed, for the royal seal and signature instantly wrought the desired complacency on the court, and on Sir John's certifying that the offenders were noblemen in his majesty's service, and his personal friends, they were allowed to retire without further question.

SEAL OF THE GUILD OF THE HOLY TRINITY, BOSTON.

CHAPTER X.

" Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
Where evils are most free ? O, then, by day,
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage ?" SHAKESPEARE.

The lady Isabel Bohun, having learnt in the interval from her niece, who the strangers were, made them heartily welcome when they appeared at Gishour's Hall, which they did immediately after escaping from the clutches of justice. Their apologies also for the fear, and positive danger, to which they had exposed their fair friends, were readily admitted, and they soon found themselves comfortably installed, in the agreeable office of conductors to the ladies on their sight-seeing expeditions, many of which had been projected, and were still to be carried on, notwithstanding the alarm of the morning. But the principal spectacle, and that on which all hearts were most earnestly set, was the nocturnal procession of the Brethren of the different guilds to St. Botolph's church, which took place after the business of the day was closed, and all other attractions had ceased,

and in which the different fraternities of merchants rivalled each other in the splendour of their dresses and ornaments, and in the costliness of the emblems of their respective crafts and patron saints, which were borne in state on these occasions. These societies, partly religious and partly civil, consisted of all the respectable members of each particular craft resident in the town, and provided at once for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the brethren, by excluding all foreigners and strangers from pursuing the same calling to the prejudice of the native crafts-men, and also by the appointment of a priest or chaplain for the performance of mass at certain seasons, and to pray for their souls after death. Of these guilds there were six established in Boston, distinguished by the names of St. Botolph, Corpus Christi, The Blessed Mary, St. Peter and St. Paul, St. George, and the Holy Trinity. [a] Of these the principal and most important, was the Guild of the blessed Mary, the Gilda Mercatoria of Boston, to which belonged all the principal merchants of the town, as well as many of the resident gentry, and dignified clergy of the neighbourhood.

The curfew bell had just ceased to toll when the different Guilds started from their several Halls, and amidst the glare of torches and tapers, and the joyous peal of bells from the steeple, proceeded towards the church, each headed by its chaplain and warden, and accompanied by a band of music. But what gave zest to these processions, as contrasted with those of the morning, was, that the wives, sisters, and mistresses, of the members, joined the spectacle, and threw over the whole ceremony

a Engravings of the *seals* of these various Guilds will be given as vignettes in different parts of the work. see page 60.

that magical charm, which the presence of the fair enchanters alone can communicate. The servants and labourers of the community, also considered this their hour of freedom, and joined in the devotions and amusements of their superiors with all the noise of vulgar joy; and many of all classes assuming the mask, the consequent licence both of manners and conversation, gave to the whole scene the air of a carnival.

The magnificent church of St. Botolph, as viewed from without, was surpassingly brilliant and beautiful, for the thousands of tapers, with which its altars, shrines, and chapels were lit up, made it appear one blaze of light, which streamed through the richly painted glass of its lofty windows in all the shades of the rainbow; at the same time that its "cloud-capt" steeple threw forth a flood of light from its beacon-fire upon the dusky atmosphere around.

The throngs of people which now poured into the church by the southern porch, were quite dazzled by the sudden burst of light which presented itself, and dispersing over the body of the church, were some time before their eyes could recover from the effects of the glare of tapers, sufficiently to distinguish objects. When they did so, the several guilds were seen defiling along the nave and aisles towards the high altar, and taking up their stations under the rood loft, at which point their wardens and other officers left them, and advancing into the chancel, took their seats in the stalls assigned to them.

Amongst the distinguished persons, who attended the procession of the guild of the Blessed Mary, were the lady Bohun and her party; and her rank also procured for herself and them seats in the chancel during the per-

formance of high mass, which took place immediately after the arrival of the guilds.

The imposing splendour of the Roman Worship in a fabric of such magnificence, accompanied with the solemn chaunt, the sublime anthem, and the heart-thrilling music as it reverberated along the lofty and vaulted roof, together with the smoke and fragrance of the incense, and the sacrifice, as is pretended, of God himself, could not fail strongly to affect the feelings of the devout spectators; and such was the powerful impression wrought upon the public mind on the present occasion, that, although every part of the capacious church was thronged with devotees, not a sound, nor a whisper, disturbed the solemn silence, save the voices of the choirs which rose and fell with the undulations of the holy symphony. Even the stillness of such a multitude had something awful in it, as if death had suddenly fallen upon a whole people in the most cheerful period of their existence, and blighted them, as it were, in an instant. But the ceremony over, joy and tumult resumed the ascendancy, and the mob, who but a moment before were prostrate upon the bare stones, in the attitude of prayer and penitence, rushed forth from the presence of their God, as if eager to commence a fresh account of sin with the world and the prince thereof.

On the general dispersion of the assembly, lord Lacey supported the lady Bohun and her niece on their way homeward, and made the best of his way through the still crowded streets, towards South Place; nor did he cast a single thought upon his friend and the fair Christine, so fully was his attention occupied by the two ladies under his charge. On arriving at Gishour's Hall, how-

ever, their thoughts naturally reverted to their late companions, and they were much surprised at not finding them at home before them, and much more so, when, after the lapse of an hour, neither of the parties made their appearance.

Servants were dispatched with torches in different directions in vain, and lord Lacey himself returned to the church, but found all there dark and deserted, nor could any trace of the lost ones be discovered, so that the inmates of Gishour's Hall became greatly alarmed for the safety of their friends, who they feared must have been waylaid, and perhaps murdered, by some of the marauders that always frequent fairs, and whose depredations were terrible in the times of which we write. Lord Lacey in particular was almost distracted at the doubtful fate of his friend, for whom he vowed, he would willingly have sacrificed his own life, and hinted mysteriously at lord Nevil's being a person of more illustrious rank and importance than he appeared, and that upon the safety of that young nobleman depended, not only his own future fortune, but probably his life. In the midst of these doubts and apprehensions, the sound of horsemen entering the court yard was heard, and presently after Sir Owen Tudor himself, and Simon Briton, were ushered in, who, after the first salutations were over, immediately inquired for lord Nevil and Christine. The tale of their unaccountable disappearance was soon told, and wrought the most extraordinary effect upon the hearers, who raved like mad-men, the old captain for his daughter, and both for the Prince,—the Prince! For it now appeared that the wild and facetious Nevil, was no other than Prince Henry, the heir apparent of England, whom his own

wayward humour, and the jealous policy of his father, in excluding him as much as possible from public affairs, thus left to run wild as his fancy dictated.

On the present occasion, this unnatural jealousy, which had gathered new ground for suspicion from the gallantry and courage his son had displayed at Shrewsbury, had prompted the King to send him to Bolingbroke, ostensibly to visit the scene of his father's infancy, and to recruit after the fatigues of the late campaigns, in which he had been slightly wounded, but positively to remove him from further opportunities of distinguishing himself in the battles likely to be fought in the north, and from thereby acquiring fresh reputation, and ingratiating himself still more with the army and the people, with both of whom his approved valour and frank demeanour had already rendered him a great favourite, notwithstanding the wild companions and licentious courses to which he was too prone.

Some misgivings as to the propriety of his conduct towards his son, and some twinges of conscience touching the personal safety of the heir to his honours, in traversing the country almost alone, at a time when it was overrun with hostile fugitives and discontented nobles, induced him to dispatch Sir Owen Tudor to Bolingbroke, to look to his welfare, and if possible to keep the vagrant prince out of harm's way.

On his arrival at the Castle, Sir Owen was surprised to find the captain there alone, busy in preparing for the arrival of the prince, and pluming himself on his skill and cunning in parrying so adroitly the queries of the young lords as to the disappearance of the ladies. His opinion was, that Lacey and Nevil were gone to meet

the prince, and he was in hourly expectation of their return with his illustrous guest that was to be. A brief comparison of notes with the governor put all his conceits to flight, and the little great man felt truly humbled at his own want of penetration, in not being able to distinguish between a true prince and a false lord.

But what then had become of the runagates? This also every body in the Castle knew, except the self-confiding captain, and a few enquiries at once put Sir Owen on the right scent, whereupon he immediately ordered horses that he might resume his pursuit of the royal fugitive.

Father Philip entered the Castle at the moment the governor was about to sally forth, and on perceiving him, scarcely waited to give the greeting due, before he begged him to dismount for a few minutes, and listen to some important information he had to communicate, and which he had just gleaned from the mouth of a dying man, upon whom he had been performing the last rites of religion. This man, one of the party that attacked the Castle, had on that occasion been severely wounded, and left by his comrades for dead, but being afterwards found in the adjoining wood, writhing with agony, was removed into the village, and had lingered until that day, when death put an end to his sufferings. In his last moments, the consolations of religion had been denied him by the chaplain of the Castle, unless he confessed, who were the authors and instigators of the assault before mentioned, and what motives and objects the assailants had proposed to themselves. Thus urged, the wretched being had declared all he knew, and this formed the budget which the priest was so anxious to open to Sir Owen Tudor.

From his narrative it appeared, that John Holland, son of the late forfeited earl of Huntingdon and duke of Exeter, related both to Hotspur and the earl of Marsh, together with Henry Montacute, the son of the late earl of Salisbury, whose fathers had both been executed by the king for conspiracy against him;—these two young men, stripped of their patrimonies and honours, had, after the defeat of their cause in the battle of Shrewsbury, fled eastward, and on the evening of the arrival of the prince at Bolingbroke, had, with a few followers, joined the company of pilgrims, the better to disguise their real character, and escape detection.—It moreover appeared, that a casual sight of the prince, with his single companion, in a situation apparently so unprotected, had aroused all the vengeance and party rancour of the young earl of Huntingdon, and that the attempt upon the fortress was the mad project of an hour, and consequently failed, as we have seen.

Here another question arose; whither had the conspirators betaken themselves?—most probably to Boston, in the same company in which they reached Bolingbroke. This was an additional motive for hastening with all speed to that great mart of merchandise and monkery; for amid the licence and tumult of a fair, many opportunities would present themselves to a watchful enemy to work his vengeance upon the thoughtless young man, whose general habits were so wild and unguarded. With this strong conviction on his mind, Sir Owen hastened to Boston at his best speed, and only arrived in time to find his worst fears realized.

CHAPTER XI.

"We are oft to blame in this;—
'Tis too much proved,—that with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself."

SHAKESPEARE.

The prince, all life and spirits, with the beautiful Christine by his side, was pointing out to her the effect of the illumination upon the splendid altar piece, and the paintings depicted on the panels of the roof, each of which illustrated some portion of Scripture History, for the waving lights seemed to give life to the creations of the painter's pencil, and to make his angels, which were floating on the clouds, appear actually to fly about; when, after gazing upwards for some moments, and receiving no answer to his remarks, on turning round, he found the sylph had all at once vanished, and his eager and flashing eye in vain sought her in the throng that were now pressing towards the door. Vainly also did he search every aisle, chapel, and confessional, disturbing sundry agreeable *tête à têtes* in his way; and then issuing forth into the darkness, offended many a modest

matron and comely wife by his unmannered scrutiny, for he pried under every close hood he encountered, in the hope of finding the pretty face he sought. At length the thought occurred to him, that perhaps she had returned with Lacey to Gishour's Hall, and he rapidly directed his steps in that direction, but in traversing South Street, he caught a glimpse of a female figure leaning on the arm of a male companion, a short distance down Shod Friar's Lane, and instantly pursued the apparition, for the contour, it struck him, was that of his *inamorata.*

The parties pursued evidently accelerated their pace, on hearing some one behind them, and suddenly disappeared when he was close upon them. Had they sunk into the earth, or melted into air? for there appeared to be no other means of escape, each side of the road being skirted by a dead wall, in which he could find no opening of any sort: and, lost in bewilderment, he stood to consider what was next to be done. Whilst thus at a pause, a strong gleam of light was shot direct upon his face and person, and as suddenly withdrawn, and such was the dazzling effect of the momentary flash, that he was not sufficiently collected to discover from whence it proceeded, and after its disappearance, the gloom of the lonely lane was so much more intense, that he was compelled to feel his way with his hands, which he did slowly and cautiously along the wall, until he found a small door. It yielded to the pressure, and he stepped in, nothing doubting but that he had found the way by which his fair *perdita* had given him the slip. All was darkness within, and as the youth paused in the gloomy chamber, dubious of the propriety of adventuring fur

ther, the door closed behind him, with a noise that shook every nerve in his body, and made him sensible of the folly of his heedless pursuit of a shadow.

His first impulse was to draw his sword, and stand upon the defensive;—but how guard against an unknown and invisible foe?—what dungeon had he been entrapped into?—and who were the enemies he had to contend with? These were perplexing questions to one in his situation, and as thought brought no consolation, with the native energy of his character, he shook off the gloomy fears that fancy began to engender, and after certifying the fact that no person stood near him by the rapid flourish of his weapon in every direction, he commenced an examination of the boundaries of his prison.

The door, by which he had entered, was the fisrt object of his search, but having lost all notion of its relative position from the spot on which he stood, he had to grope round the wall, which he did several times to no purpose, for wherever the door might be, it was so exactly fitted into the wall, that it could not be distinguished by the touch. He therefore soon ceased from the useless attempt, and seating himself on the bare stones with his back against the wall, and sword in hand, determined to await, in that attitude, whatever might next appear. But how futile are the strongest resolutions, when the energies of the mind outstrip those of the body! and so great had been the fatigues to which his wild vagaries had exposed him, within the last three days, that he had not been seated thus above ten minutes, when his head drooped upon his breast, and the poor young prince sunk down on the damp pavement in a sound and heavy slumber.

The prior of the Dominicans, a man of much learning and high birth, had been a soldier in his youth, and was therefore, from habit, as well as disposition, imperious and overbearing. From early associations, he had acquired a violent affection for Richard the Second, and as violent an antipathy to the House of Lancaster, in all its branches, which originated in some slight, which he considered his claims to promotion had experienced at the hands of John of Gaunt, under whom he had at one time served; superadded to which was the rancour of bigotry, for, since he had assumed the cowl, and more particularly since his elevation to the superior's chair in the Dominican Priory at Boston, religious zeal had prompted him to take part against Henry the Fourth, the son of his ancient enemy, and one, who, like his father, was suspected of a predilection for the reformed doctrines, and consequently an object of jealousy and hatred to all devoted members of old mother church; amongst whom Father Ambrosius ranked as one the most violent. Hence his house was the resort of malecontents, and the place of refuge for sufferers in the cause;—and secret councils were held in its dark cells, which aimed at nothing less than the subversion of the existing dynasty.

On the night of the procession of the Guilds, a meeting of this kind was held, in consequence of the arrival of certain important personages, and the agitation of a scheme, which was to shake the usurper from his throne, and install the earl of March in his place, was the subject of discussion amongst the members.

"As for the heedless boy, it seems a pity to take advantage of his reckless gaiety; he is too giddy and thoughtless to merit the serious consideraton of men of

bold thoughts and great daring, like those that form the links of this enterprize. Let us pull down the subtle tyrant from his throne, and his whelps will be smothered in the dust of his downfall."

Such was the speech of one of this council of traitors, the point in debate at the time being, whether they would promote the interests of their cause by dispatching the young Prince of Wales, of whose presence at the fair they were fully informed, or not; for Holland, Montacute, and de Mohun, the father of Rupert, were present at this discussion.

"Be it so;—but still I could wish the lion's cub should be dealt with, before his fangs become sharp enough to inflict deadly wounds: for this hair-brained Harry of Monmouth, let me tell you, has a spice of his cunning father in him, and is already creeping into the hearts of the mob, who admire him for that very quality, which should tell most against him, namely his profligacy."

"Nay, you must allow the boy comported himself well in the field at Shrewsbury, though to our cost. But I see, Holland, you have not forgiven him the rough handling you received at Bolingbroke, and truly you owe him but small thanks for his courtesy on that occasion."

"Curse him;—my dagger thirsts for his blood, and with my good will he shall not escape the death. But what say you, father Ambrose,—do you think we should let slip the opportunity thus afforded us of crushing the cockatrice at once? Is it not the very chance we have sought,—nay, have prayed for?—nay more, is it not a sacred duty?"

"My voice is for death to the scion of the hated house, that slew its master, and would subvert our holy church;" said the Prior.

Rupert's father here mildly replied, "I cannot see how the death of this youth will promote our cause, and it will certainly expose us personally to great, and perhaps inevitable danger, for you may be assured that such a deed will not escape detection."

The divided council here became noisy and tumultuous, the majority being decidedly prone to blood; whilst those, that were for saving the life of the prince, did not dare to advance any arguments against the project, except the dread of its prejudicial influence upon the rebel cause. Matters were in this state, when the entrance of another monk occasioned a cessation of the angry controversy.

The monk whispered his superior, who thereupon exclaimed, "Saint Dominic be praised!—The scoffer is taken in his own snare; and it shall go hard but we will teach him the reverence due to our holy order, before he sees the light again."

"This, gentlemen," he continued, "is a matter, which touches my personal dignity, and that of my order, closely; for in the open day,—in the midst of a multitude, in the presence of the High Bailiff himself, and of all the honourable personages assembled to witness our holy procession,—this fellow, a malapert and beardless boy,—broke violently through our line of march, at the very foot of the High Cross, overthrowing in his course our venerable bursar, and discomposing the solemn and devout bearing of other members of our order;—thus giving occasion to the ready laugh and contemptuous sneer of the mob, who are but too prone, without such inducement, to vilify and scoff at the rites and ministers of religion. Now this very fellow, as if led by

the hand of providence, has followed, for what object I know not, one of our fraternity through the postern of our house, and the vigilance of our porter has cut off the possibility of retreat:—he is therefore at our mercy. And be assured, he shall sorely rue the day in which he wronged the Dominican Friars, or I am not the Prior of this house!"

"But who or what is this violator of the dignity of your order?"

"A stripling of a page, as his jaunty manners and gaudy dress would imply;—but, be he noble, or simple, he shall taste the sweets of our penance cell."

"What if it were the Prince himself, as I strongly suspect it to be, for your description tallies with his appearance, and he has been seen with the lady Bohun, who was one of the company assembled at the high cross."

"By the Holy Virgin, it is he;" screamed the Prior, with the savage exultation of gratified malice and anticipated revenge. "Who shall now talk of sparing the young viper, that has thus thrown himself into our hands?—It would be a positive neglect of the chance providence has given us, if we did not cut off this limb of Satan,—this fire-brand of England, who, like his immediate progenitors, will drench his country in the blood of its noblest and best, to the utter subversion of both church and state. I could not answer it to my conscience if I allowed him to escape. Drag the Lancasterian dog into our presence, and let us glut our eyes with his humiliation and his misery, for, I doubt not but the rampant blade is now crest-fallen enough, and will sue for mercy at the very hands of those he a few hours since treated so scornfully."

Some time elapsed, yet the porter did not return with his prisoner; and the prior, becoming impatient, rung his bell several times. At length another monk entered, of whom the superior demanded, why Bernard did not bring in the prisoner; who, after hesitating a moment, said he would go and see. Another interval of some minutes occurred, yet no prisoner appeared, and on the bell being again rung, a second monk entered, and, in trembling accents, announced that the prisoner was not to be found. Never was such an exhibition of demoniac fury, as that which the prior displayed at this moment; the lion robbed of his prey, or the tiger of her whelps, could give but a faint shadow of the wild actions and savage exclamations, which his disappointed revenge suggested. He clutched the unfortunate informant by the throat, and vowed to annihilate him and the whole house, if the boy were not produced before him forthwith. But vain was the anxious scrutiny of the alarmed brotherhood, and equally vain the personal search of the fierce prior himself through the secret chambers of the house. So that, however reluctantly, the 'black monk' was forced to conclude that the royal youth had for the present escaped the machinations of his revengeful spirit; and he retired to his private chamber to conceal the bitterness of his disappointment, and to brood over new mischief.

CHAPTER XII.

"Round many a Convent's blazing fire,
Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun;
There Venus sits, disguised like a Nun,
With Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a Friar."

WORDSWORTH.

How long the royal hero of our narrative had slept on his cold couch, he knew not, when the grating of a key aroused him from his broken slumbers, and starting to his feet, he perceived, by the gleam of twilight from without, that two dark figures for a moment filled the door-way, instantly entered, and as quickly and cautiously reclosed it after them. The momentary glimpse he had, led him to suppose the apparitions a couple of friars; but the whispered fears of one of them were evidently those of a female, and the tone of both proved, that they thought themselves the only occupants of the apartment.

"Hush, hush, my sweet charmer; and confide in me. My arrangements are such, that it is impossible any discovery should take place; even if the suspicions of our Cerberus of a Prior were awakened against me: but I am confident I stand well in his books, and he would as soon suspect the old sub-prior himself of having a fair friend in his cell as me."

"Oh! did you not hear a step?" said the same soft voice.

"No, no!—It is only your foolish fears, my bird of Paradise, that alarm you. Lean upon me, and be silent, and all will be well. I have just found the panel that leads to my secret chamber in the vaults. Ah, ah, my bonny Gilian, I should be loath to change stations with our superior, proud and pompous as he is;—no, no, if there be an office that gives a man true power in a monastry, it is that of cellarer;—he has a key that will open all hearts,—he has a bribe that is more powerful than gold,—more seductive than flattery. And though last not least, he has always a comfortable retreat for a loving friend, and a choice liqueur to entertain her with."

By this time the amorous cellarer and his fair friend, had forced themselves through the narrow pass, and the prince, who had been close beside them for some time, now held the panel, so that the utmost efforts of the monk could not close it, though he cursed it by all his gods, and invoked some score of saints to his aid. At length the prince said,

"Don't be alarmed, friend;—your secret is safe with me, but I shall not allow you to close this outlet, until you reopen the one by which you entered, and permit me to escape."

"Sancta Maria!" exclaimed the terrified monk, and away he and his companion hurried, without waiting to hear more. Without a moment's consideration, the prince followed them, the panel closing of itself behind him, but he had hardly taken two steps, when he fell, and rolled down a flight of stone steps. On recovering from the stunning effect of his fall he was still in darkness,

and not a sound broke the fearful silence that reigned around. To remain where he was, was of course impossible, and the danger of proceeding alone in darkness, he had but too recently experienced to his cost, he therefore, after a short consideration, resolved to call to his aid the amorous friar, who he fancied could not be far off. At first he only whispered, intreating his assistance to escape, and assuring him, on his pledge of honour, never to divulge the particulars of his intrigue. This modest tone however produced no effect, and he was forced to threaten to shout at the top of his voice, to alarm the whole monastery, and thus obtain relief for himself, as well as an unenviable notoriety for the worthy cellarer. This drew the old fox from his hole, for a light was presently held out at a small door near, and a shaven crown, and a broad purple face, with an immense hooked nose,—any thing but a beautiful representation of Cupid,—peered forth into the darkness over it;—then a great brawny neck was thrust forward, and immediately afterwards withdrawn, and the door was closed and fastened on the inside upon the approach of the prince.

After a parley of nearly ten minutes, the door was again opened, and the prince admitted into the cellarer's boudoir. A fine young girl, in a monk's frock, with the cowl drawn over her head, sat trembling on a stool at the far side of the snug apartment, and on a small round table was piled a supply of vivres, and a black jack of wine;—nor had the comforts of a fire in this subterranean retreat been forgotten by the friar.

The parties surveyed each other for some moments with doubt and distrust, till the prince putting forth his hand, said, "Come, father, fear nothing from me;—

I am only sorry I should have found it necessary to disturb your comfortable *mènage;* but 'needs must when the devil drives,' and I had no choice."

"I think I may trust you," said the friar, "for I like your frank and honest face."

The jovial friar, his leman fair, and the gay young prince, were soon 'hale fellows well met,' and the contents of the pitcher, as well as the savoury solids, which the interest of the cellarer had procured from the convent kitchen, were fast disappearing, when their orgies were disturbed by the trampling of numerous feet over their heads, accompanied by the sound of many voices.

"They are searching for me," said the prince, "can you not let me out by some secret gate at once, and then your danger of discovery will be less."

"I think I can ;—follow me quickly," said the monk. "Gilian, my brave lass, stay you here quietly until I return,—I shall not be away two minutes."

But Gilian would not remain behind, but insisted on quitting the monastry with the stranger, promising however to return on some future night, and the fear of discovery would not allow the friar to argue the matter with a wilful woman at such a moment. They were therefore quickly on their route to the proposed outlet, threading a tortuous labyrinth of narrow galleries, when their rapid steps were arrested by the sound of voices, and the gleam of lights, in the distance before them.

The friar thereupon turned his steps through the intricate windings of other passages, until they entered the vaults, in which were deposited the rich stock of wines belonging to the monastery, the peculiar province of father Ralph's official duties, with every nook of which

he was perfectly familiar. But even here they were not in safety, for, as if simultaneously, the sound of approaching footsteps were heard in several directions, and the perplexed fugitives knew not which way to fly to avoid the enemy.

At this crisis a bright thought entered the fertile mind of the cunning monk, and he quickly raised the head of an empty hogshead, and placed the fair Gilian within it, with a charge to lie still, if she valued her life,—to say nothing of her honour. This was a clever contrivance, but how to conceal his male friend still remained to be considered, without much time to do it in, but luckily the youth was as prompt as his reverend friend, and pushing aside the lid of the same hogshead, which already contained the young lass, he slipped his lithe form in by her side, and the friar, with a grim smile, replaced the cover over the snug little party, and hurried away to join his sable brethren, in search of those he had just barrelled up.

Fortunately his absence had not been observed, and he therefore accompanied those who examined the cellars, and carefully kept them from the cask so strangely filled. With what a throbbing heart he led the way out of the vaults, may be well conceived, and yet he burned with impatience to return thither, which he did as soon as possible, and was by no means pleased to find the two, whom he had left so closed ensconced, seated comfortably together on the top of an adjoining puncheon. But this was no time for petty squabbles or jealous bickerings, and he begged them again to follow him in the direction originally proposed.

They reached the gate unmolested, but the sound of voices on the farther side caused the monk and Gilian

again to retreat, and the prince to stand up behind the door which immediately opened, and several friars entering, closed it after them. The darkness prevented them from seeing the prince, although their garments touched his person, and they proceeded into the interior, leaving him alone in the passage. He immediately attempted to open the postern, but it resisted all his efforts, and he waited a short time, in hope that the cellarer would rejoin him, but in vain. At length, wearied with inactivity, and anxious to find some other means of escape, he groped along the wall, and presently found a turning to the right, which he followed, until a door arrested his farther progress. It was half open, and he perceived that the adjoining chamber was occupied, for the parties within were at high words, to which he listened in breathless silence.

"So thou canst prefer the puny love of a boyish fancy, like that of this vagabond, de Bohun, to the noble and manly passion of the prior Ambrosius, or if you like it better, of the cavalier, Henry Stanley.—Nay, by my hopes of happiness, if you will smile upon me, and give me the kiss of true love, I will forswear the cowl for thy sake, resume the sword, and fight my way to a name of glory, that thou shalt be proud to share. I am no child to be pleased with a toy to day, and to throw it away to morrow; but I offer you the permanent possession of a heart of fire, and a soul of passion;—But why do I talk thus?" reasoned the haughty monk with himself, "methought the beauty of a fair brow, and the twinkle of a soft eye, had ceased to have charms for me;—but I knew not the full force of their magic until I looked upon thee, Christine, the beautiful and

spirited personification of my noonday fancy, and my midnight dream. Will you accept the love I proffer, on the conditions I have tendered?"

"My lord, I have already told you, that my heart and hand are both pledged to another; and if they were not, the black monk, Ambrosius, would never be my choice; and I am only sorry to think so meanly of him, as his present language compels me to do."

"Foolish girl! know, that although the black monk condescends to sue, he has the will and the power to force compliance."

"Then he is a fiend, as well as an hypocrite!" said the noble girl, with a burst of indignation that flushed her pallid brow with crimson.

"Dost thou defy me, silly girl?"

"Yes, dastardly shaveling, I—do defy you;" shouted the prince, as he burst into the apartment, to the astonishment of the prior.

"Oh! the prince!—the prince!" screamed the terrified Christine, as she fell back in a swoon.

"The prince!—the prince!" reiterated the prior, his passion almost choking him; "Then welcome death, or revenge!" and drawing a knife from his sleeve, he flung himself headlong upon the youth, with the intent to stab him to the heart. But the activity of the latter evaded the deadly blow, and enabled him to plunge his own sword into the side of his murderous assailant. The black monk fell heavily upon the floor, and, writhing in mortal agonies, expired, with the most horrid imprecations upon his lips.

Scarcely had this tragedy been completed, when the door opened, and in rushed a tumultuous rabble, headed

by Rupert de Mohun, lord Lacey and Sir John Falstaff. All stood aghast at the spectacle which presented itself;—on the one hand lay the prior, weltering in his blood;—on the other the apparently lifeless corpse of Christine, with the pallor of death on her brow;—and between them stood the prince with his bloody sword still reeking in his hand, and regarding the multitude with a fierce aspect, as doubtful whether to receive them as friends or foes. But the hearty congratulations of lord Lacey and Sir John Fastaff, at once dispelled all fear on this head, and he immediately flew to assist Rupert in raising the fair cause of all this commotion.

She revived, and with eyes of terror looked round on the assembly, and recognizing several of those near her, exclaimed,

"Oh! bear me from this abode of profligacy and vice, veiled under the garb of religion and virtue!"

Her wishes were immediately complied with, and she was conveyed to Gishour's Hall, under the escort of her friends; whilst the mob forced their way into the penetralia of the monastery, rejoicing in the opportunity thus afforded them of gratifying their curiosity, cupidity, or revenge against the black monks.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Knavery cannot, sure, hide itself in such reverence."
SHAKESPEARE.

During the performance of high mass in St. Botolph's church, before referred to, the eyes of Christine wandered incessantly amongst the audience, in search of the form she loved, not doubting that he was somewhere near her; and consequently the assiduities of the youth by her side, whom she knew only as lord Nevil, were lavished upon her in vain. The eyes of a young and loving couple, intent upon finding each other, are never long before they meet,—so it was on the present occasion: and watching her opportunity, Christine slipped away from her companion, and joined a muffled figure, which none but the eyes of love could have recognized as the smart and gallant Rupert de Mohun. Anxious to escape from the throng, as well as, for a time, from the observation of her friends, she consented to accompany her lover to an apartment in the Dominican Friary, which had been assigned to his father as a place of concealment, till his future course should be determined. Thither therefore they hastened, but, as we have seen, barely quick enough to escape the pursuit of her previous chaperon:

for they were actually the parties whom the prince pursued down Shod Friar's Lane, although they knew not who their pursuer was.

In this lone chamber, the young couple held that sweet communion of heart and soul, which young love only knows, and in comparison with which, all other joys are but as evanescent bubbles on the stream of life, whereas one of these precious moments forms a sunny spot on the tablets of memory, which, by recalling the spirits of the past, can shed a gleam of happiness over the darkest hour of misfortune. Alas! that such moments should be so few, and so fleeting!

This agreeable *tête à tête* was interrupted by the entrance of Sir Reginald de Mohun, Rupert's father, who had just left the traitorous assembly before described. From him they learned the particulars of the entrapment, and subsequent disappearance of the prince; and the scrutiny that was then being made for him throughout the monastery. The trio at once identified lord Nevil with the prince, and consequently became most anxious for his safety, not doubting that he was still in the monastery, and that if discovered, his life would be sacrificed to the malignity of the prior.

As no help was to be found within the convent walls, the elder de Mohun advised his son to hasten immediately to Gishour's Hall, and to apprise lord Lacey of the danger of his royal friend, and to come in force, and demand his immediate release. That this might be done with greater despatch, it was arranged that Christine should remain with the old gentleman until Rupert's return, lest a moment's delay should prove fatal; and Christine consented the more readily to this plan, from a

conviction that the gay young prince had involved himself in his present awkward dilemma, from his admiration, or at any rate his pursuit, of her,—a fact which gave him an interest in her thoughts, which perhaps Rupert himself would have hardly approved.

Shortly after Rupert had proceeded on his mission, the prior, in the course of his personal search, entered the apartment of de Mohun, and stood, apparently aghast and horrified at the sight of a lady within the chaste and hallowed precincts of the monastery; and fiercely interrogated the noble refugee, as to how and why she came there. De Mohun explained at large that the young lady took an interest in the fortunes of himself and his son, and had accompanied the latter from church that evening to pay her respects to him, forgetting that it was against the regulations of the house that sheltered him, for the breach of which he sincerely begged pardon. During this explanation, the eyes of the monk were fixed intently upon the blushing face of the beautiful Christine, and even after de Mohun had ceased speaking, they continued to glare upon the poor girl with a fierceness which made her quail beneath his glance. At length, without deigning to reply, he slowly took his way to the other parts of the house, and Christine felt infinitely relieved by his departure. A few minutes however brought a message to Sir Reginald,—the prior wished to speak with him, and he obeyed the summons. Presently after the same sable messenger,—and there was 'VILLAIN' written on his scowling brow,—brought a request from Sir Reginald, that she would join him in the parlour of the prior.

She followed the steps of her guide, and presently found herself in a small, but commodious chamber,

fitted up with every comfort, and indicating nothing of the ascetic habits of monkish discipline, but the crucifix and small altar, on one side, which, indeed, formed a part of the furniture of every respectable chamber in the times of which we write. There was no one in the room, and the guide had disappeared. What could this mean? Where was Sir Reginald?

She was not allowed to remain long in suspense, for a side door presently opened, and the prior entered, with a slow and stealthy pace, at the same time making a profound obeisance, and relaxing his stern features with what he intended to be a gracious smile, but the passions, that were constantly agitating the muscles of his face, had deprived him of the power of smiling agreeably, and converted his efforts in that way into mere grins, evidently assumed to hide the evil purpose of his treacherous heart, and consequently offensive to the most inexperienced eye. To all which Christine answered only by a low courtesy.

Gracefully, and with much blandness, for he was courtly bred, the monk motioned and invited the lady to a seat. "They told me Sir Reginald wished to see me," said Christine.

"He will be here shortly," responded the prior, "in the mean time let me beg you to be seated."

"I prefer standing, reverend father, as becomes an humble maiden in the presence of the prior of St. Dominic."

"Bah!" said the prior, impatiently. "My malison upon St. Dominic, and all the saints in the calendar! canst thou see nothing in me, my brave maiden, save the prior of St. Dominic!"

"See! good father,—what should I see?"

"See?—see a soldier, a cavalier, a man of the world! —any thing but a monk!"

"I am content, reverend prior, to regard you as what you are,—the devoted servant of holy church, a guide in the path of virtue, the solace of the dying bed, the stay of innocence, and the scourge of vice."

"Why did you not add, sworn to celibacy?"

"It concerns me not, holy father; and therefore, why should I canvass the tenour of your oath? I fear you are offended at my imprudent entrance into your holy house."

"Faith not I, my bonny damsel; and it depends on yourself to make it the happiest incident that ever befel me: for, truth to tell, I became desperately enamoured of your pretty face from the moment I first beheld it in de Mohun's chamber."

"Surely I misunderstand the words of the holy prior, Ambrosius. He cannot mean what he says."

"By St. Dominic, fair lady, but he does; and in proof thereof, behold him, an humble suppliant at your feet." And the monk threw himself into the corresponding attitude, and looked up into the face of the indignant Christine, with all the passionate devotion, with which young enthusiasts are wont to worship before the glowing pictures of their favourite saints.

"Rise, sir; nor insult me further with this mockery. If you have aught to say to me, that it becomes a virtuous maiden to hear, speak at once, for I will not stay to listen to such language as you have just uttered, as unfitting for me to hear, as for you to utter."

The hypocritical monk quailed before the firm tone, and scornful eye, of the virtuous damsel, as she confronted him.

"Thou hast then pledged thy troth," resumed the monk, in a sarcastic tone, "to this traitorous son of a forfeited Earl, who has not a hovel wherein to shelter his bonny bride."

"If the term traitor apply to de Mohun, thou hast a just title to share it with him. But be he what he may, he has my troth and my heart; and I am proud to confess the love I bear him, nor will the darkest frowns of misfortune ever be able to wean my affections from him, which only cling the closer to a worthy object in the hour of affliction."

The rest of the conversation, of which the prince became an accidental auditor, together with its disastrous termination, have already been detailed.

SEAL OF THE GUILD OF ST. GEORGE, BOSTON.

CHAPTER XIV.

"When maidens sue
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,
All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would have them."

SHAKESPEARE.

GREAT was the joy that hailed the reappearance of the prince and his fair friend at Gishour's Hall; and various were the recognitions that took place at the general congress of the characters of our drama. Lord Lacey dropped his masquing name for that of the earl of Surrey; and, on the entrance of Sir Reginald, leaning on the shoulder of his son, he was instantly recognised as an old acquaintance by Simon Briton, for he had formerly been Constable of Bolingbroke Castle; and at the same moment he was challenged by lord Surrey, as the forfeited earl of Somerset, upon whose head a price had been set by the king, for his participation in the battle of Shrewsbury, and other traitorous acts in conjunction with the general body of malecontents, for which crimes and misdemeanours he would have been at once arrested, but for the interposition of the prince, who said,

"This gallant young soldier," indicating Rupert, "is, I believe, the son of this veteran rebel, and has shewn himself so truly loyal and valiant, that we will take his pledge of honour for the future fidelity of his father."

The aged nobleman bowed his hoary head at the gracious speech of the youthful prince, who with his usual gaiety, added, "He only shall be deemed a traitor to day, that dares to look miserable amidst the happy group around me."

So saying, he shook Sir Reginald heartily by the hand, and on perceiving the smiles that mantled on the faces of the ladies at witnessing this scene, in the exuberance of his youthful spirits, he immediately proceeded to kiss them all round, including sundry pretty waiting maids, the venerable lady Bohun, and his devoted friend Dame Moreton herself. The old nurse was indeed a proud and happy woman at this joyous eclaircissement, which afforded so triumphant a proof of her penetration and discernment;—for the slight discrepancy of mistaking the son for the father, she considered of no moment:—and she now regarded the youth before her with all the warmth of affection, with which her memory had for years doated upon the foster-child of her bosom.

Day now began to dawn, and the anxiety of Sir Owen for the safety of the prince, induced him to urge his immediate return to Bolingbroke; for it was probable that the events of the past night, together with the rumoured presence of the prince, would excite a great commotion in the town, which might not be suppressed without danger to the principal actors. To this proposal the prince lent a very unwilling ear, until it was arranged that the whole conclave should return together, whereupon pre-

parations for departure were immediately made, and the whole party quitted Boston before the bustle of business had aroused the drowsy revellers of the preceding evening from their heavy slumbers.

On entering Bolingbroke Castle, the first person that saluted them was young[a] Owen Tudor, the son and heir of Sir Owen, and the future progenitor of a race of kings, who had that day arrived with the news of the dispersion of the rebels in the north, of the submission of Northumberland, and of the probability that the king would pass a night on his return at his good Castle of Bolingbroke.

All were rejoiced to learn the happy issue of the expedition, but various were the feelings excited by the expected presence of the stern but politic Henry the Fourth of England, surnamed of Bolingbroke.

But how prospered, in the mean time, the most important feature of our little drama; namely, the loves of our gentle dames and enamoured knights?

The earl of Surrey had sedulously cultivated the frequent opportunities he had enjoyed of ingratiating himself with the beautiful Rosabel, nor had he sighed in vain, for she listened with favour to his suit; and with her consent he had even sounded Sir Owen himself, but that cautious old courtier, although he highly approved of the match, declared his utter inability to decide without the approbation of his royal master, whose pleasure, he said, must first be consulted. Thus the matter stood on the morning of the king's expected arrival.

a Edmund of Hadham, the son of Owen Tudor, by his wife, Queen Catherine, widow of Henry 5th, King of England, married Margaret, sole daughter and heiress of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, the grandson of John of Gaunt, and of this marriage was born one son, afterwards Henry VII, King of England, the first monarch of the Tudor line.

But the affairs of our intrepid little heroine, Christine, and her gallant, though secret, admirer, Rupert, did not run so smoothly; the evident fancy,—it could hardly be called passion,—of the prince, for that young lady, being the cause of much annoyance and great anxiety to both the lovers, for they dreaded lest the discovery of their mutual attachment, should excite the anger, or inflame the resentment of the mercurial Henry of Monmouth, against the younger de Mohun, perhaps to the destruction of both himself and his father, whose life and fortunes hung but upon the breath and favour of the royal youth. But fortunately for them, they had to do with a prince of a generous heart and high principles, though of somewhat loose habits, and Christine, judging thus much of her illustrious admirer, adventured a bold step with him, by consenting to be his companion in a solitary stroll, early on the morning of the expected arrival of the king.

She had hitherto treated all his advances with jeers and bravado, and her seeming compliance on the present occasion, had consequently inflamed the excitable fancy of the prince in an immoderate degree, and he was proportionably the more gallant; but in the midst of his rhapsodies, his fair companion arrested his flow of eloquence, and with a serious face addressed him as follows.

"My gracious lord, ever since your first arrival at Bolingbroke, you have deigned to honour your humble handmaiden with marks of your royal favour, and with frequent declarations of attachment, of which she feels utterly unworthy;—now, my lord, I am willing to believe these, so far as to think, that you really wish me well, and would be sorry to render me unhappy."

"Make you unhappy, my sweet Christine!—What would I not rather sacrifice to make you happy?"

"Nay, but hear me, my lord, and that calmly, for I am speaking to you in sad and sober earnest, and I do so in confidence of the goodness of your heart, notwithstanding your general gaiety and apparent thoughtlessness:—yes, my lord, I must now tell you plainly, that your attentions to me, however kindly meant, have been a constant source of pain and trouble to me, and, at the present moment, make me truly miserable." And the poor girl sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Miserable?—makes you miserable?—my love,—my devotion,—my readiness to surrender all I am, and all I hope to be, for your sake, renders you miserable?—you do not,—you cannot—love me, then, Christine!"

"My lord," said the hesitating and blushing girl, "my gracious lord,—I love another."

"Is it possible that Fitz-Allan can have played me false?—I thought he was otherwise engaged, and I have not sought to cross his path."

"You are mistaken, my lord;—the earl of Surrey has ever treated me with courtesy and respect, but never spoke of love."

"Who then can be my rival?"

"One, my lord, who was the partner of my childish sports, and whose manly virtues have ripened youthful fancy to a more tender feeling."

"By my fai', but he is a happy dog; and I have no alternative left but to hang myself, or murder him."

"My lord, you said, but now, that you were willing to make any sacrifice to promote my happiness;—let me beseech you to subdue a fleeting fancy, which you will

forget as soon as you re-enter the vortex of pleasure that forms the atmosphere of a court; and grant me,—her whom you have so often declared you love,—grant me a boon." And the weeping beauty knelt at the feet of the youth, and raised her tearful eyes to his countenance, with the earnest expression of anxious yet confiding hope; and, after regarding her steadily for a moment or two, he raised her gently from her suppliant position, and mildly said;

"What can I do for you, Christine; or for—him you love?"

"Blessings upon your kind heart for that word, my lord," said the still weeping girl. "It is for him I pray, —and through him for myself. He languishes under the fear of your displeasure, though at present favoured with your smiles. He is here, and will speak for himself."

At this moment Rupert advanced from an adjoining thicket, and taking Christine's hand, the two lovers knelt before the astonished prince, and implored his pardon and protection.

"How, Rupert!—is it you that have robbed me of the heart of my little mistress? Then I fear my case is desperate indeed, and I may as well surrender my pretentions at once, and with a good grace. Rise,—pray, rise,—and be assured, that though on the present occasion not allowed to enact the part of the favoured lover, the lovers shall not want my favour in whatever I can do to render them happy."

In kindly chat, and merry mood, the trio returned towards the Castle, and by the way arranged what might be requisite to appease the king, touching the delinquency of the elder de Mohun.

CHAPTER XV.

"What?
I will be jovial; come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that?"

SHAKESPEARE.

Scarcely had they reached the Castle gate, when the sound of bugles awoke the echoes of the hills around, and the glittering array of the royal escort was seen descending into the valley. All the garrison was instantly in motion; the men-at-arms were drawn up in the court yard; the governor, the seneschal, and the other officers of the Castle, in full costume, assembled at the port to receive their sovereign lord.

The cavalcade presently reached the draw-bridge, and the king, mounted on a splendid war-horse, dashed over the bridge with all that ease and dignity, that courteous smile, and gracious manner, which, in the earlier stages of his fortune, had won for him 'golden opinions from all sorts of men.' He appeared in a more than ordinary good humour; and it was remarked by those who were accustomed to attend him, that his manner had less of pomp and parade than generally marked his appearance in public. It might be that the recollections of his youth were crowding upon his mind, and softening down the asperities it had acquired in 'battling the bray' with a rough and turbulent world:—but, be that as it may, his friends and adherents never saw the great and prudent

Henry of Bolingbroke so much unbend himself as on this visit to his native town and Castle.

This argued well for those whose hearts throbbed high for the safety of themselves and their friends, and whose very existence depended upon the fiat of the great man, whom they now saw so gracious and condescending.

The banquet was immediately served in the great hall of the Castle, and the illustrious guests at once took their seats on the dais, the knights and nobles next in succession, and below the baronial salt the men-at-arms, and inferior retainers of the guests and garrison; the strictest attention being paid to rank and precedence in the placing of every individual at the board, from the king at the head, to the greasy scullion at the foot.

As the viands disappeared, and the wine circulated, the tongues, which the awful presence of majesty had hitherto tied up, began gradually to find their wonted fluency, and the king, as if determined to play the cheerful host, was affable and gracious to all around him, remaining at table long after his usual time for retiring, and enjoying the jovial scene, to which he had been so many years a stranger. At length, raising a goblet to his lips, he pledged his guests, and bade them be merry, for it gladdened his heart to see such happy faces about him.

The rafters of the lofty hall shook with the hearty cheers that responded to the pledge, amidst which he bowed to the company, and was about to retire, when a bustle took place at the lower end of the hall, and he beheld Sir Owen Tudor advancing towards him, leading by the hand his daughter Rosabel, and followed at a short distance by the earl of Surrey.—They knelt before the king.

"Let me crave your majesty's pardon, for presenting my daughter."

"The presentation of so fair and beautiful a lady," said the king, taking her hand, "requires no pardon, the pleasure and honour is mine. She would grace and ornament our court, Sir Owen;—how is it you have not presented her before?"

"My liege, she has an ambition to be presented by a younger and more noble courtier than your aged servant; and to obtain your gracious approbation of the match is our present humble suit."

At this moment the earl of Surrey advanced to the side of the young lady.

"And this" said the king, "is, I presume, the knight that aspires to her hand?"

"So please you, my gracious lord." said the earl.

"Well, be it so," said the laughing king. "I can refuse you nothing to day."

The trio again did homage, and withdrew, and the king was about to do the same, when his purpose was again frustrated by another appearance. This was no other than the prince himself supporting the trembling Christine, and followed at a respectful distance by Sir Reginald and Rupert de Mohun.

"How now, Harry, what mummery have you in hand here?"

The prince and the maiden knelt, but spoke not.

"Why, thou art not mad enough, Harry," continued the king, "with all thy folly, to come to me with a lovelorn tale like that of thy companion, Fitz-Allan."

"My gracious sire, I appear here, not as the lover but as the father of the lady by my side."

"I cry you pardon, venerable sir. And, pray, what may be your suit for your beautiful little daughter, for I see you have adopted one, who might move an anchorite, much more so young a father?"

"That I have a great esteem for this young lady, sire, I allow; and therefore, I trust, you will permit me to plead her cause, or rather that of her lover, who unfortunately stands under the ban of your displeasure."

"What, have we traitors here too?"

"No, my liege, they have ceased to be such, or I should not now stand here to plead their cause." In rapid and eloquent words, he detailed the account of the attack upon the Castle, and his own perils at Boston, in all of which he had been saved by the loyal intrepidity of Rupert.

"And now, father, can you call this youth a traitor?"

"No, assuredly not, my son;—I shall be happy to call so gallant a youth, my friend and yours:—for the lady,—if he has her consent, let him take her, and be happy. His fortune shall be cared for."

"But who," resumed the king, "is this venerable man?—methinks I should know that face."

"He is the father of my friend and protector." said the prince.

"And his name?" said the king.

"Is de Mohun, my leige."

"What! the traitorous earl of Somerset,—the sworn friend of Northumberland and Glendour,—the dark plotter against my throne, and my life?—Away with him to the block, and fix his head on the highest battlement of the Castle. There is no mercy for veteran traitors like him on this side the grave."

The prince, Rupert, and Christine, hung upon the robe of the enraged king, and prevented him from retiring; and the former thus resumed his entreaty.

"My gracious sire, he is here and at your mercy, on my pledge of honour for his safe conduct, and will you compel your son to forfeit his word? For my sake, I beseech you to spare him. For the sake of this young couple, whom you have so recently made happy, and whose happiness will be utterly wrecked by his death, I beseech you to spare him. For the sake of his own grey hairs, I implore you to pardon him."

The king seemed to struggle with himself for some seconds, but he could not resist this appeal to his better feelings, and raising those that knelt before him, he turned to his ancient enemy, and said,

"Somerset, you have been my implacable and uncompromising foe, but for the sake of my son, and of yours, —and for the sake of this beautiful maiden, whose happiness hinges upon your existence—I pardon you."

So saying the king hurried out of the hall, and the assembled guests pressing round the prince, heaped blessings on his head, for his earnest and successful interposition in favour of the proscribed de Mohun. But the thanks that the youth valued most were conveyed in the grateful glance of the tearful, but brilliant eyes of the beautiful Christine, as she almost embraced him in the warmth of her acknowledgments.

This scene somewhat chilled the joy and mirth, which before reigned throughout the hall, but the impression gradually wore off, and the evening concluded with songs, music, and dancing; and the cheerfulness was not a little increased by the unexpected accession of a party

of masquerading pilgrims, who had arrived in the town on their return from Boston.

But though many seasoned vessels were seated at that princely table, who valued themselves on the quantity they could imbibe, by two in the morning all the guests had retired, or found a resting place for their heavy heads beneath the ample board, with the exception of a glorious trio, upon whom good wine wrought no visible change, except that it rendered them more happy and uproarious. These consisted of that pink of knighthood, Sir John Falstaff, now installed in the royal chair, self-elected, *nem. con.;* his right hand supporter, the reverend and exemplary representative of Holy Church, Father Philip; and on his left, the valiant veteran, a true son of Mars, captain Simon Briton; who might truly say,

"We three
Jolly fellows be."

But the best of friends must part, and the sound of bugles, announcing the break of day, compelled them to separate.

During the morning repast, of which the royal party partook, the prince suggested to his father, that he would best complete the work he had began by insisting that the weddings should take place before his departure, to which the king good humouredly assented; and the consequence was, that Father Philip, who had just fallen into a sound sleep, was dragged from his couch, and hurried away to the chapel, to perform the ceremony. This he did with many blunders and mistakes, both of the words and parties, which formed a prolific source of merriment to the spectators.

The king and the prince claimed the privilege of saluting the brides, and immediately took horse to rejoin

the army, which awaited them on Lincoln Heath, amidst the loyal and delighted acclamations of the assembled multitude; the bells of the village church ringing a merry peal in honour of the occasion, and the bugles making the hills to reecho with the "Reveillé of Lancaster."

NOTE.

The only authentic description of Bolingbroke Castle now extant, is contained in a MSS. vol. of Church notes by Gervase Holles, deposited in the British Museum. It is as follows:—

"The Castle of Bullingbroke was built by William de Romara, Earl of Lincolne, and ennobled by the birth of King Henry the 4th, who from thence took his sirname. Heretofore it was a famous structure, but now gone much to ruine and decay.

"The towne stands in a bottome, and the castell in the lowest part of it, compassed about with a large moat fed by springs. It is most accessible on the south-west part, the rest being encompassed by the hills.

"As for the frame of the building, it lieth in a square, the area within the walls conteyning about an acre and an half, the building is very uniforme.

"It has 4 stronge forts or ramparts, wherein are many roomes, and lodgings: the passage from one to another lying upon the walles, which are embattled about. There is likewise 2 watch-towers all covered with lead. If all the roomes in it were repayred, and furnished [as it seemes in former tymes they have bin] it were capable to receyve a very great prince with all his trayne.

"The entrance into it is very stately over a faire draw-bridge. The gate-house a very uniforme, and strong building. Next within the porter's lodge is a payre of low stayres, which goe downe into a dungeon, in which some reliques are yet to be seene of a prison-house. Other 2 prisons are on either side.

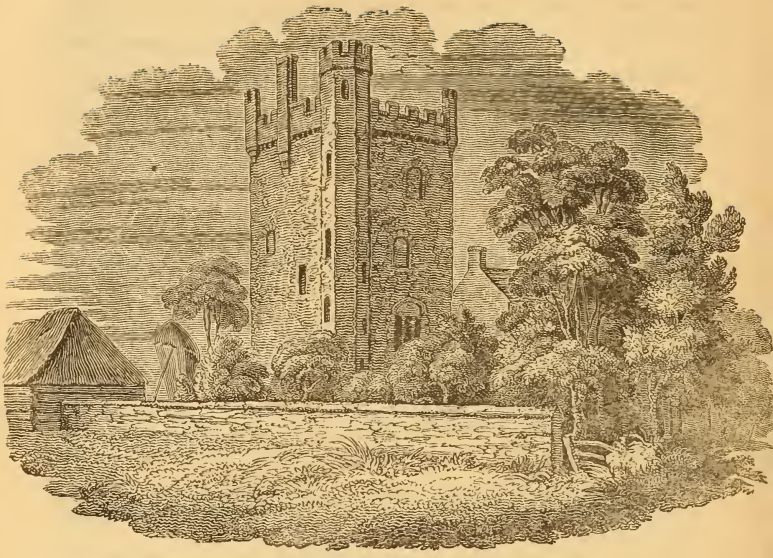
"The building itself is of a sandy stone hewen of a great square out of the rocks thereby, which though it abide the weather longe, yet [in process of tyme] it will moulder, especially if wett gett within it, which hath been the decay of many places of the wall where the roofe is uncovered.

"There be certaine roomes within the castle, [built by Queen Elizabeth of freestone] amongst which is a fayre great chamber with other lodgings.

"In a roome in one of the towers of the castle they usually kept their auditt once by the yeare for the wholle Dutchy of Lancaster, having ever bin the prime seate thereof, where all the recordes for the whole countery are kept.

"The constable of the castle is Sir William Mounson Lord Castlemayne, who receaveth a revenue out of the Dutchy lands of £500 per annum, in part payment of £1000. yearely given by the King to the Countesse of Nottingham his lady.

HARLEIAN MS. No. 6829, p. 162.



A LEGEND

OF

KYME TOWER.

Why tarries Lord Kyme in the lonely bower,
When nobles are thronging the halls of his tower?
Why wanders he forth at the midnight hour,
Forgetful alike of his pomp and his power?

Communes he with demons, or ærial sprites,
That float on the clouds in the darkest of nights,
Misleading unwary and wandering wights,
That venture to follow their dangerous flights?

'Tis not to converse with a spirit of air,
That the lord of the tower is loitering there;

Yet he waits for a being as gentle and fair,—
As light and as lovely as float on the air.

She comes, in her beauty and brightness serene,—
The modest and blushing, yet smiling Selene;—
Her innocent fondness is easily seen
In her tender, confiding, yet tremulous mien.

Ah! maiden, beware of the Lord of the Tower,
Nor trust his false vows at this treacherous hour;
Tho' gracious his smile, o'er his features will lower
A frown that will crush you, when once in his power.

* * * * *

'The halls are lit up with a dazzling light;'—
The minstrels are singing of love's soft delight;—
Proud nobles and ladies, all gorgeously dight,
Assemble to honour the lordly knight.

Lord Kyme has attained to the height of his pride,—
King Henry's fair daughter is placed by his side,—
Cecilia, his glory, his love, and his bride:—
What honour could subject aspire to beside?

But no traces of pleasure those stern features show,
Whereon they should shine most resplendently now:—
Doth Kyme then repent of the nuptial vow
He has pledg'd to the lady with diadem'd brow?

A matron of ominous aspect appears,
By adversity sour'd, and bent double with years;—
And slowly her steps to the bridegroom she steers,
And thus with her curse she startles all ears.

"Selena is dead!—nay, why do you start?
"The Lord of Kyme Tower hath broken her heart:
"Full well hath the villain enacted his part;
"But his bosom shall throb with the deadlier smart."

" My curse be upon you, by night and by day,—
" At home in your tower,—abroad when you stray;—
" May your friends all forsake you,—your children betray;
" At your uttermost need, be unable to pray."

" Install'd in your grandeur, you're seated on high,
" But soon in the dust all your greatness shall lie;—
" When next to the battle-field boldly you fly,
" On the blood-clotted turf you are destin'd to die."

" When the last throes of death are convulsing your frame,
" With bitter remorse you shall call on *her* name,
" Whom you robb'd of her honour and virtuous fame,
" And left to decay in the blight of her shame."

The crone has departed,—the guests are all flown,—
The lord and the lady are left there alone;—
The Baron his guilt to his bride dares disown,
Though he feels for the crime he can never atone.

The Wars of the Roses called knights to the field,
And Kyme, who to none in the battle would yield,
Was quickly prepar'd his good falchion to wield,
From Warwick and Edward his father to shield.

The Lord of Kyme Tower put spurs to his steed,
For, whether foredoom'd in the battle to bleed,
Or to reap the proud glory of Victory's meed,
To words of ill omen he gave little heed.

But the curse of his crime, 'mid the war-trumpet's sound,
When the storm of the battle was thick'ning around,
Still follow'd his track o'er the blood-sprinkl'd ground;—
The Lord of Kyme Tower 'mongst the slaughter'd was found.

NOTE.

John Lord Viscount Wells, of Well near Alford, married Cicely, second daughter of King Henry the 6th, who survived him, and afterwards married a gentleman of the noble family of Kyme, of Kyme Tower, near Boston in this county, and died without issue.

BROOKE'S CATAL. YORKE'S UNION OF HONOUR, p. 40.

THE

CONFLAGRATION.

"The glow
"Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
"Was imag'd back in blood, the sea of slaughter."

BYRON.

SHORTLY after the return of Edward the First from the Holy Land, his numerous chivalrous followers were disbanded; and those amongst them, who had not been so far inflamed with crusading zeal as to part with their castles and estates before embarking on the expedition, returned to their deserted homes; but there were many, who, from extreme ardour in the cause, or in hope of obtaining larger and richer possessions in the sunny east, had sold their patrimonies, and consequently on revisiting England, found themselves quite destitute, with no resource but the arms they had so bravely wielded against the Saracen. The proud knight and the gallant soldier, reduced to the last extremity, and inured to plunder by the customs of war, did not hesitate to supply their necessities by the strong hand, without respect either to the laws of the land, or to those of honour

Sir Robert Chamberlain, a person of this class, formerly possessed of great wealth and extensive landed property in the neighbourhood of Boston, the whole of which he had squandered away in the Crusades, on returning to the scene of his former splendour, saw himself absolutely in want of the common comforts of life; and, therefore banding with others, of desperate fortunes like himself, concerted a plan for the plunder of the rich Fair of Boston, to be held on the approaching feast of St. Andrew.

With this view a part of the gang entered the town on the first morning of the Fair, equipped as knights and esquires, who came to take part in a tournament, which was to be held that day in the tilt-yard of the castle of Sir Philip Tilney, on the western side of Wide Bar-Gate. Their appearance no way alarmed the townsmen, as it was customary for gentlemen to flock to such entertainments from all parts of the country. These military plunderers were soon followed by the rest of their comrades, disguised as monks and canons, who of course excited no distrust, and were consequently allowed to disperse themselves over the town, in prosecution of their nefarious design.

In the afternoon of the same day, when most of the company at the Fair were collected near the barriers to witness the feats of arms performed by the champions at the tournament, consternation was suddenly spread through the assembly by shouts of "Fire!—Fire!" which were heard simultaneously in various quarters. The distracted multitude hurried away in all directions to extinguish the flames, for the town had been fired by the pretended monks in three different places, and so well had they done their diabolical work, that in a short time

the whole place presented to the eye one immense Conflagration: for the buildings being mostly of wood, the fire communicated from house to house with incredible rapidity, consuming in its way church and monastery, warehouse and shop, booth and private dwelling, with all the valuables they contained; insomuch that ancient chroniclers have recorded, that veins of gold and silver, mixed together in one common current, flowed down the centre of the burning streets into the sea.

During the confusion consequent upon this dreadful calamity, Chamberlain and his confederates, falling upon the rich stalls and bales of costly merchandize, possessed themselves of all that was most valuable and easy to be removed, barbarously murdering the unhappy merchants who attempted to defend their property. While the fire was yet raging, the robbers decamped with their booty unmolested, the townsmen being busily engaged in saving their own, or their neighbours' houses from destruction.

Sir Robert Chamberlain, the projector, and leader in this infamous outrage, whilst stripping a jeweller's booth, the owner of which he had stabbed to the heart, was violently assaulted by a lovely young woman, the daughter of the murdered tradesman;—like a tigress, she sprung upon him, and, but for his mail-shirt, would have avenged the death of her father by that of his assassin. Before she could repeat the blow, the ruffian snatched the dagger from her feeble grasp, and turned its point to her own bosom; but, on remarking her beauty, he stayed his hand, and said, in a bantering tone,

"By St. George, damsel, but thou art the fairest jewel thy father possessed.—Come, we must be better acquainted."

So saying, he consigned the now insensible girl to the care of some of his party, whose flight presently after became general.

On the third evening succeeding the catastrophe above related, Chamberlain, with five of his associates, had secreted himself at a small cottage in a wood near Ewerby, and, after carousing to a late hour, retired to the only sleeping apartment the hut could boast, and in which was immured the unhappy Janet Kolbein, whom he had compelled to yield to his will after murdering her father. His deep potations soon drowned his senses in forgetfulness, which his beautiful, though unwilling, companion no sooner perceived, than she rose from the couch, and descending with a stealthy pace, stepped cautiously over the prostrate sleepers below, and fled for her life.

The first house she reached in her timeless flight, was one in which she found a ready welcome for herself, and an attentive ear for her extraordinary tale, which the gallant Franklin that owned it had no sooner heard, than he girded on his good broad sword, and, staff in hand, issued forth to secure the murderous incendiary, without, for a moment, considering the danger of the enterprise, or the fearful odds he would have to encounter.

On approaching the cottage, with the situation of which he was well acquainted, he found every thing in the state the fugitive had described, and being anxious to capture the principal offender, he merely removed the weapons of those below, and then hastened to the apartment of Sir Robert. This he did not however effect without startling that guilty person from his feverish slumber, who instantly missing his fair companion, and hearing the heavy step of a powerful man approach,

sprung from his couch, and, seizing his sword, stood ready to receive, as a soldier ought, whoever might appear.

"Who comes there?" was his stern demand.

The reply was a blow from a quarter-staff, that would have felled an ox, and which shivered his sword to pieces, instantly after which he felt himself in the iron gripe of a powerful hand, which he found it impossible to shake off. But Chamberlain was not a man quietly to surrender under any circumstances, much less to one man, and the struggle between them was consequently long and desperate, the culprit only yielding at last from utter exhaustion.

This battle which took place in darkness, at once aroused the drunken sleepers below, who in their stupid bewilderment, and alarm at the exraordinary noise over their heads, fancied that a strong body of the officers of justice were upon them, and therefore instantly fled, leaving their captain to defend himself as he best could.

The Franklin now having his enemy at his mercy, compelled him to accompany him to his house, and on the following day conducted him, under a proper guard, to Boston.

In the ensuing week he was tried and convicted of the aggravated charge against him, and condemned to be hanged and gibbetted at Boston, forthwith. A lofty gallows was accordingly erected in the centre of the Mart-Close,[a] the principal scene of his villany, and the incendiary suffered amidst the smouldering ruins of the dismantled town, and the execrations of the ruined inha-

a The yard adjoining the Grammar School, in which the Mart is still annually proclaimed.

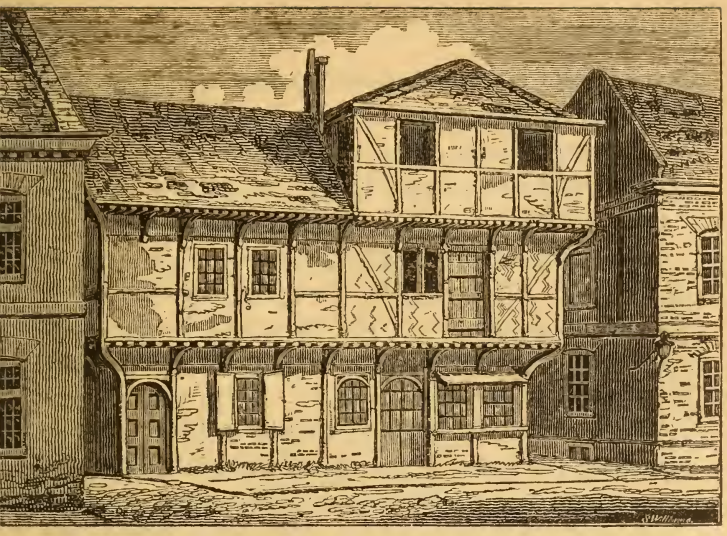
bitants. Scarcely was life extinct, when the incensed multitude heaped fuel around the gallows-tree, and, with shouts of triumph, consumed it and the culprit together.

NOTE.

Stow says, "A Justis was proclaimed at Boston, in the faire time in 1287, whereof one part came in the habyte of monks, the other in sute of chanons, who had covenanted after the Justis, to spoile the faire; for the atchieving of their purpose, they fired the towne in three places; it is said the streams of gold, silver, and other metal, molten, ranne into the sea. The caiptaine of this confederacye was Robert Chamberlain, Esquire, who was hanged, but would never confess hys fellows."

STOW'S CHRONICLE, p. 227.

THE SEAL OF THE STAPLE, BOSTON.



FATHER JEROME;

OR, THE SAILORS ASHORE.

CHAPTER I.

"At eventide my mother sits,
"Her knitting on her knee,
"And wakes by starts, and dreams by fits,
"But never dreams of me." MITFORD.

THERE is an ancient House yet standing in South Street, Boston, at the corner of Shod Friars' Lane, which, although shorn of its former importance and respectability by contrast with the modern buildings around it, was once a mansion suitable for the residence

of a high and honourable family. Decay and change have of course defaced many of its original features, though its form and fabric still prove its great antiquity. Its walls, formerly curiously traced, and ornamented with highly coloured paintings, which the projection of the upper stories defended from the weather, have lost all their glory; and the grotesque heads and devices, which grinned forth from the carved oak frames of window and door-post have all been swept away by the ruthless hand of time, or of modern innovation. But in the times of which we write, the house in question, with its frontage unobstructed towards the river, and possessed of an extensive garden behind—its now dismantled chambers hung with tapestry, or shining with highly polished oak, and furnished with all the detail, that in those days was considered necessary to comfort and luxury;—this house, so furnished, and so adorned, and peopled with the active spirits which then thronged its hall, presented an object altogether far superior to the one which now meets the eye of the observer, and impressed him at once with the conviction, that it was the residence of one who was a lord in the land.

We have been thus particular in describing the former condition of this ancient house, because it was the scene of several incidents we are about to relate.

In the beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, Sebastian Cabot, the celebrated discoverer of Newfoundland, then about thirty years of age, succeeded to the possession of the house above described, amongst other properties of his lately deceased father; and the residence of his widowed mother, and two young sisters therein, together with the convenience of the port of

Boston, as an occasional haven for his shipping then trading to the Baltic, made him a frequent visitor in South Street. On these occasions he was generally accompanied by some of his officers, young men of rank and family, who were proud to serve under a commander of his reputation and success, for the sea service had lately risen greatly in estimation with all classes, in consequence of the recent important discoveries effected by Columbus, Vasquez de Gama, Cabot, and others, and it was considered a vast field of enterprise, in which both glory and wealth were to be obtained.

Amongst these gallant visitors were two young men, the younger sons of good families in Boston, who had been seized with the enterprizing spirit which then prevailed, and whose friends had consequently confided them to the care of Cabot. These youths, active, alert, and fearless of danger, promised to make able seamen and good officers in process of time; but a certain recklessness of humour, frequently seen in our nautical heroes when ashore, led them to commit sundry wild pranks, which gave great offence to the sober citizens. These freaks were however regarded with more indulgence by the ladies, especially the younger ones, and not the less so because the mad-caps were themselves young and handsome.

The following conversation will at once show that the sisters of Sebastian Cabot were amongst the latter class, though their prudent mother and her ghostly adviser by no means took the same view of the matter.

"Nay, Patty, I pray you, spit not your spite at me. If Harry has a grey eye, it is as full of expression and of love, as those of Alan, whatever colour you may call them."

"Why will you seek to quarrel with me, Flory? I did not mean to offend you."

"Offend me, forsooth!—I am not so easily offended, believe me, Martha. But since you talk of colour, I shall take the liberty of saying, that a dark moustache is decidedly handsomer than those of a sandy shade, like Master Alan Witham's."

"That depends entirely upon taste, Miss Florence: but you cannot deny that a fine tall fellow, of power and proportions to protect himself and his lady from all comers, is decidedly to be preferred to a puny mortal, whom nature seems to have intended for a woman, but by some strange mistake has thrust forth upon the world a pitiful epitome of blighted manhood."

"I scorn your words, malapert. There is not the swaggering blade that wears a sword, be he as tall as Boston Stump,[a] with whom Harry Tudenham dare not cope to the death."

"Stump! stump!—the term I should fancy belongs peculiarly to the Tudenhams, for they are all curtailed of man's fair proportions."

"Aye, aye, Patty, you are only angry with Harry, short as he may be, for overlooking you, and lavishing his smiles upon your younger sister."

"Nay, now you jest indeed, Flory, for you know I never sought, nor desired to rob you of your little beau."

"Well, well;—say what you will. Harry is a pretty fellow, and though somewhat wild, if I mistake not, he dearly loves little Florence Cabot, and if I know any

a The lofty tower of Boston Church is so called by Mariners, to whom it is a beacon at sea. The name, so inappropriate, seems to have been given on the principle of "lucus a non lucendo."

thing of her mind, she likes him as well as he does her."

"Then, Flory dear, let us be friends, as we have ever been, and as we have especial need at present to be, for our lady mother, and father Jerome, seem fully determined to thwart our fancies, and compel us to discard our merry lovers. Last evening my mother read me a long lecture on the subject, and threatened me with seclusion in the convent of St. Clare, if I again encourage the advances of Alan; advising me at the same time to have an especial eye upon you, as my younger sister, and one, who is consequently in a great measure under my tutelage. But, hark, I think I hear her step on the stairs. Let us fly to our wheels, or we shall have a sermon of an hour's length.—Just tie up this rebellious snood, or I shall look quite frightful."

"How does this curl suit the side of my face;—just tell me, Patty? Would it not look better farther forward?"

"So," said the sister, "It looks quite killing now."

But, alas! this adjustment of a stray curl had delayed the young ladies at the toilet until their venerable, but shrewish mamma popped her head in at the door, which she had no sooner done, than she opened upon them a volley of angry invective.

"Ye idle jades, will ye never leave toying before the glass? By St. Catherine! I will soundly switch you for this. Here have I been busy in the household for three good hours,—in the larder, the buttery, the brewhouse, and the kitchen, whilst ye slatternly hussies have been kemping your hair, and adorning your delicate persons, to parade them before two as mad gallants as ever wore sword. Ye wanton hussies, have ye no sense of shame or decorum? Know ye not that the ranting boys of the sea,

whose thoughts and lives are as wild as the rude waves they are wont to buffet withal, care nought for the silly maidens they delude beyond the amusement of an idle hour. In troth, I can see nothing that is likely to come of it, as father Jerome truly says, but sore heart, soiled fame, or a dishonoured house. And I tell ye once again, that my peaceful dwelling shall no more be made the scene of the noisy pranks and unseemly jests of these roaring jacks, who disturb my household, hunt my maids, romp with my daughters, and laugh at my angry frowns the while. But in good time here comes the Reverend Father, who will rate ye soundly for your unmaidenly proceedings; and so I will leave you to his admonition, in the hope that you will profit by it, whilst I again make the circuit of my maids."

So saying, with a passing whisper to her confessor, as she entered, the restless housewife hurried away to rate her servants and direct their operations.

The monk thus indicated was a handsome man of about forty, above the middle size, of an intelligent countenance, and with abundance of thick dark hair, which almost concealed the small white circlet of the tonsure on the crown of his head. His garb was of course that of his order, but, unlike most of his fraternity, his manners were bland and apparently unassuming, which rendered his advances less suspicious, and made him a general favourite. There were however tales abroad to his prejudice, touching sundry mysterious intrigues in which he was said to have been concerned, but which his general reputation for sanctity, and the ostensible correctness of his demeanour, prevented from operating extensively against him.

With a gracious smile the confesser approached the giddy girls, who in obedience to the orders of their mother had sullenly seated themselves to their wheels, and were spinning away with a rapidity and intentness, that seemed to defy the monk and his expected lecture to withdraw their attention from their work.

" My dear young ladies," said the insinuating ecclesiastic, " you look charming to day. What can have made your lady mother so angry with her beautiful and industrious daughters ?"

" You know well enough." was the sulky reply.

" Dame Cabot certainly told me something concerning some officers belonging to the " Golden Fleece," your brother's immense merchant ship, now lying in the harbour, and about to sail, I believe, to the Baltic."

" Oh ! she told you something :—and pray what did your reverence tell her in reply ?—Why I will tell you, —that our innocent chat and flirtation with two honourable young men, whom our brother introduced to us, will endanger our peace of mind, our good fame, and the reputation of our house. Pray, father Jerome, since you are appointed to lecture us, please to say what you ever saw in our conduct to justify such shameful and slanderous insinuations."

" My dear young ladies, permit me to speak. Your lady mother, knowing that I have the interest of her house warmly at heart, did consult me upon the subject you have named."

" Yes ;—and you told her to drive our lovers from the house, and to shut us up in a nunnery."

"By no means, my dear young lady. Nothing was farther from my thoughts. I merely recommended caution, in consequence of the general flighty character of

sailors, and the ungoverned licence of their manners; and I consider I shall not perform my duty, unless I renew that warning to you personally."

"Oh! yes;—it is very kind of you,—no doubt. And we are very much obliged,—very much obliged indeed," replied both the young ladies sarcastically.

"Nay;—but hear me through, ladies; and then decide for yourselves whether these gentlemen are deserving of your confidence. Last evening, as I was returning late to the Priory, I encountered, in Worm-Gate, your love-sick swains, full of wine and noise, and each supporting on his arm a bouncing dame in flame-coloured taffeta."

"It cannot be, father. You were mistaken in the persons."

"No, by'r Lady;—there could be no mistake, for they recognised and spoke to me with all the familiar insolence, and saucy ribaldry peculiar to drunken men."

"How was Harry Tudenham dressed," said Florence, "for I would wager my life he was not one of the revellers?"

"He had on a blue velvet cap with a gold band, and a cock's feather with a ruby buckle."

"My Harry's cap to the letter;—but his cloak and doublet?"

"His doublet was of blue, slashed with pink; and his cloak a bright scarlet, guarded with gold twist and fur."

"Then it was he, Patty;—the false and wicked boy! —Oh! I will never—never speak to him again."

At this moment Biddy, the old lady's favourite maid, intimated to the reverend father that her mistress desired his presence in her closet; whither the holy man immediately repaired, leaving the young ladies in great tribu-

lation at the faithlessness and profligacy of their lovers, and fully determined never to see them more.

But, alack for the stability of such determinations, for scarcely had these vows been breathed, and the fair forlorn ones were still sitting cheek on hand in doleful despondence, when a gentle tap was heard on the stairs, which was immediately followed by the appearance of the merry face of Master Harry Tudenham, peeping through the half open door, and whispering

"Flory;—Flory, dear!—Are you alone? Is old dame Spitfire in the way?" And having by this time satisfied himself of the clearness of the ground, the youth sprang instantly to the side of his mistress, who at first with sullen sobs repelled his advances.

But why should I proceed to describe what all can so much better conceive;—the gentle entreaties,—the fond reproaches,—the boldly asserted innocence, the readily-believed justification,—and the happy reconciliation, with all its delightful blandishments? Suffice it to say, that the lovers cordially joined counsel against the common enemy, the young ladies undertaking to conduct the war at home against mamma, and the gentlemen to direct operations abroad, and even to carry their incursions into the enemy's territories. With this arrangement they parted, but not until future meetings had been agreed upon, and time and place minutely specified.

CHAPTER II.

" I am a friar of orders grey.
" And down the valley I take my way :
" I pick neither blackberry, haw, nor hip,
" Good store of venison lines my scrip.
" I'm cloth'd in sackcloth for my sin,
" With good sack-wine I'm lin'd within."

OLD BALLAD.

The complin bell, which always rang at seven in the evening, had just ceased tolling at the Grey Friary, in South End, when the pretty Bridget Gadaway, dame Cabot's confidential maid, tripped lightly through the grove at the back of the Dominican Friary, and flitting like a fairy over the esplanade that intervened between it and the Franciscan Garden, suddenly disappeared through a small gateway in the wall, which opened at her approach as if by magic. She had perhaps been dispatched with a message by her mistress, or was herself going to confession. The latter appears the more probable, for the Reverend Father Jerome, Almoner of the Monastery, was waiting the arrival of the buxom damsel with impatience; and on her arrival immediately retired with her to a small oratory, erected in a remote part of the garden, for the better indulgence of devout contemplation, far from the vanities of a wicked world.

Such however are the prying propensities of the ungodly, that the good man's arrangements on this occasion

did not shelter him from the observation and consequent evil surmises of our two nautical scape-graces, who, whilst prowling about the convent, intent upon mischief, accidentally became privy to the secret interview between Biddy and the Friar, but without alarming the parties whose motions they were watching.

In the mean time, vespers being over in the chapel of the priory, the monks had retired to their dormitories, with the exception of four worthy functionaries, namely, the sacristan, the chamberlain, the cellarer and the bursar, whose offices procured for them immunity from most of the restrictions enforced upon the community in general.

This quartetto, having assembled in the refectory, soon became as jovial as good wine, a roaring fire, and hearts devoid of care, could render them. There they were wont to indulge without restraint, for their principal, whose authority alone they had to fear, had become childish with age, and helpless with infirmities, the accumulation of many years of sloth and intemperance.

Twice had the fat cellarer dragged his unwieldy person to the cellar to replenish the ponderous tankard, which held about a gallon, when their party was increased by the entrance of the almoner.

Now father Jerome was not an habitual wine-bibber, whatever other faults he might have, and it would be rash to assert that he had none, although his high reputation for sanctity caused him to be much sought after by fair devotees.

"What!—again at your nocturnal orgies?" said he. "I blush for your monstrous irregularities, which have already given currency through the town to rumours highly prejudicial to our house and order. In justice to

myself, and the confidence reposed in me by our venerable prior, I shall be under the painful necessity of reporting your conduct to the Provincial, on his next visit."

"Baugh, baugh, brother Jerry," said the cellarer, "sit thee down, and taste the good Malmsey at thy elbow. 'Twill drown thy sour humour. I know thou art a good fellow at the core, and lovest—aye, what do'st love?—Why a pretty face, and a brave kirtle. And, marry, next to them, is there on earth a more enchanting sight than a noble jorum, mantling to the brim with generous wine like this?"

"Come, come, brother Jerome," said the bursar, "we tamper not with your pleasures, therefore do not you spoil our sport, for we were right merry before you came."

"Hilloa, Ralph, man, cheer up;" bawled the chamberlain, slapping the sacristan on the shoulder, whose double chin had dropped upon his immense paunch, whilst his nose loudly proclaimed the triumph of Morpheus over Bacchus. The jolly sacristan thus saluted grunted forth several inarticulate sounds in reply, and again relapsed into sleep; but animal instinct still so far prevailed, that when his loving brother, the bursar, held the pitcher to his lips, he took a long and deep draught without interruption to his nasal music.

The almoner, moved by the rhetoric of his comrades, laid aside the cynic, which was only his assumed character, and soon became as happy and uproarious as the rest. When the mirth was at the highest, and the cellarer was reeling back to his chair with another full flagon, the jovial company was suddenly disturbed by a most terrific noise, the lugubrious sound of a bull's horn,

blown through a small lattice at the farther end of the refectory by young Harry Tudenham.

Those, who could move, rose and fled; the almoner and cellarer took shelter among the wine-casks; the sacristan continued to snore and grunt uncomfortably in his chair; while the bursar and chamberlain, rolling against each other on the floor, in their drunken stupidity, continued for some time to belabour each other most unmercifully.

In the mean time, Harry, and his roguish companion, Alan Witham, greatly enjoyed the scene of confusion and dismay they had occasioned, and retired shaking their sides with laughter.

THE SEAL OF CORPUS CHRISTI GUILD, BOSTON.

CHAPTER III.

"'Tis merry in Hall,
"When beards wag all." PROVERB.

THE day that succeeded the events of the previous chapter was one of festival and rejoicing in the good town of Boston, for the wily Italian, Sebastian Cabot, had quite infatuated the worthy burghers with ideas of the wonderful advantages that were to accrue to themselves and the town from the newly projected "Russian Company of Adventurers trading to the Baltic and the parts adjacent." This, like many modern schemes, was guaranteed to enrich all that speculated in it; and the inhabitants of Boston still remembered with regret the profitable foreign traffic they had carried on some twenty years before, through the Esterlings, or Merchants of the Hanseatic League, and therefore the more eagerly caught at the first chance that offered of recalling the lost treasure to their port. Hence so great was the estimation in which the successful mercantile adventurer, Sebastian Cabot, was held, that no honour was deemed too high for him, and he was consequently invited to a banquet in the Hall of the Guild of St. Mary,[a] at which he was to be presented with the freedom of that distinguished Company.

a The present Town Hall.

To this feast were invited all the honourable and respectable inhabitants, both civil and ecclesiastical; nor were our two young sailors, and the other officers of the "Golden Fleece" forgotten.

The tables groaned beneath the gorgeous display of plate, amidst which stood conspicuous the massive baronial salt, that magical boundary between the high and low; and the fumes of every delicacy peculiar to the times and season, rose in a grateful mist from the smoking viands, tickling the olfactories of the hungry guests, and setting their mouths watering in anticipation of the coming feast.

We will not trouble our readers with a tedious report of the luminous after-dinner speeches, made on this occasion, but beg them to believe that Sack and Bourdeaux were equally potent in inspiring lucid oratory, as the cold punch and bad port of more modern times, nor were the roaring boys of Bluff Harry's reign less rapturous in their applause than the jolly topers of later days.

Cabot, on returning thanks for the honour conferred upon him, took occasion to point out at large the merits of the new project, and as the company were all predisposed in its favour, every sentence that he spoke was hailed with cheers; and as he resumed his seat, he was greeted with three distinct rounds of applause.

Wereupon up rose a weighty member of the Guild, a man of great substance, and one, who for gastronomic capacity, was worthy to have flourished in the glorious days of aldermanic feasts. His name was John Vonderbum Stockfish; and being a great dealer in fat cattle, and a general victualler on a large scale, his opinion on the present question was deemed of importance, particularly

as hides and tallow formed a prominent part of the traffic up the Baltic. He thus commenced.

" Brother Townsmen."

" It is with great difficulty I rise from my chair,—I beg pardon,—It is with great diffidence I rise to express my opinion of this important—this most important !"—

Here the worshipful member, overcome by the heavy counterpoise of the '*argumentum a posteriori*,' sunk back into his chair, and such was the comfort he felt when thus reinstated, that rather than quit it again, he left the important question to take care of itself.

The successful *debût* of this great man, induced another respectable dealer in the same line, named James Vonbest Brunt, to take up the debate, which he did in the following strain.

" I am proud to declare that I fully coincide with the opinion so eloquently expressed by my worthy fellow townsman, and Guild brother, John Vonderbum Stockfish; and after duly weighing the question in all its bearings, I hesitate not to assert, that we are a lost people if we do not exert all our energies to promote the object of the company so happily projected by my celebrated friend on the right hand of the worshipful Warden. For myself, I here avow my intention of embarking all my property in the speculation. (great applause) Moreover I beg to recommend to the Guild, and to the town of St. Botolph generally, that as the draught of water will not allow vessels of the tonnage to be employed in this traffic to come up to the town, that a dock be forthwith dug at the Scalpe, near the mouth of the river, for their accommodation, that nothing may be wanting on our part to further the general success of the company,

or to secure a share of the profits to the important town and port of Boston."

This motion was immediately seconded, and carried by acclamation. One gruff old gentlemen, an ancient Guild Brother, in times past esteemed a man of letters, and who rejoiced in the use of long and high-sounding words above the every-day phrases of the profane multitude, felt sorely annoyed that so important a business should have been so speedily settled, and that too before he had illuminated the assembly with one of his long-winded and wordy orations. This was quite sufficient to induce the worthy referred to, whose name was John de Pynchum, to oppose the whole project, whatever its merits, or whatever his own private judgment thereupon.

It was sometime before his deep sonorous voice, powerful as it was, could make itself heard amidst the din of uproarious applause, jovial laughter, and the jingling of glasses and goblets: but de Pynchum, who was the well known cynic of his Guild, was too much accustomed to opposition, to be put down by clamour, and he therefore continued to declaim until a lull in the storm gave him a chance of being heard.

"My worthy Fellow-Townsmen, and Brethren of the Guild of our Blessed Lady, an imperative duty compels me to address you. When I look around me, and see all the honourable and noble of our great commercial town assembled to do honour to a stranger and an adventurer, I tremble for the consequences of such infatuation; I see the future big with ruin, and (which God forefend) our goodly port desolate and deserted, or, what is worse, the mere depôt, and place of refuge of a foreign projector, grown rich upon the spoils of our wealthy

burghers, and their fond credulity in his honour and integrity. I am fully cognisant of the preposterous fact that you have prejudged the weighty matter under discussion;—that you have approached the subject with all your perceptions obfuscated by the dazzling promises of interested speculators, and that my honest endeavours to arrest you in the mad career of destruction, upon which you are about to embark, will have to encounter nothing but contumely and ingratitude. But this conviction shall not stop the torrent of my just indignation,—nor prevent me from stripping the impostor of the false glories in which he now stands before you."—

How much more this profound reasoner might have adduced in support of his opinion must for ever remain a secret, which time itself will not be able to unfold; for the friends and adherents of Cabot, together with the rapidly progressing consumption of sack and sugar, occasioned such a hurly in the Hall, as to drown the utmost vociferations of the speaker, and poor de Pynchum was compelled to resume his seat and nurse his wrath in silence; nor did he ever after experience that solemn respect and awful deference from the fraternity, with which they were wont to listen, in by-gone times, to his florid specimens of oratory.

In the confusion consequent upon the coughing down of this learned Theban, Father Jerome made his exit from the Hall, and that too without being observed by either Witham or Tudenham, although they had agreed together to watch his motions. His absence, however, was soon discovered, and the two lovers after signalizing each other from remote parts of the table, also rose and withdrew.

It was a fine but dark evening, when they issued from the Hall; and after a moment's consultation, they proceeded towards the Grey Friary, resolved to demand an interview with the Almoner, and to compel him to promote their suit with Dame Cabot, under the threat of exposing his intrigue with her maid, and of also promulgating the Bacchanalian orgies of himself and his fraternity.

In this, however, they were disappointed for the holy father had not returned to the Friary, and they therefore hastened to fulfil a clandestine appointment they had made with the young ladies in the gardens of Cabot House. Silently and rapidly they traversed the grove that skirted the back of the Dominican Garden, and presently vaulted over the garden wall, but unluckily the confessor was then taking a solitary walk below, and the two young sailors consequently pounced upon the holy man's head, as they threw themselves into the garden, The poor monk shouted "murder and thieves!" and believed himself suddenly fallen into the hands of a legion of devils. But, remarkable as it may appear, there were angels of light near at hand, for suddenly from one arbour emerged the fair sisters tapers in hand, and from another, at the same moment, Miss Bridget Gadaway, which may be noted as one of those occurrences called remarkable coincidences.

The monk, who was more frightened than hurt, on recognising the intruders, became very bitter in his invective and remonstrances, threatening to denounce their proceedings, not only to Dame Cabot, but to the Signor Sebastian himself. Whereupon the two young men, knowing their advantage, drew him aside, and said,

"Father Jerome, it is necessary that we should perfectly understand each other. We think it possible that you may be induced to take a different view of this case."

They then, to his utter dismay and astonishment, unfolded to him all they had discovered touching his intrigue with Dame Cabot's maid, and the drunken rites nightly celebrated at the Refectory of the Grey Friary; at the same time declaring their intention to make all public if he continued to thwart their suits for the hands of their captain's sisters, and stipulating on the contrary for his hearty co-operation, as the price of their secrecy.

The wily monk said little in reply. He only begged them not to be rash in any thing they might say or do, and to await the issue of his conduct on the morrow, which he doubted not would give them satisfaction. So saying he retired, and left them at liberty to join their fair and trembling friends, who, on recognising the monk, had immediately extinguished their tapers and taken refuge in a nut-walk in a remote part of the garden, where for the present we also will leave them.

CHAPTER IV.

"Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings"

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

On the morrow Cabot was occupied all the morning with the shipment of stores, ammunition, and cargo, preparatory to his voyage, from the wharf near his house; in the centre of which he stood like a prince among his subjects, commanding, directing, and superintending the movements of his men, and observed at a respectful distance by a group of honest burghers, who having embarked much of their capital in the venture, took a strong interest in all the detail of the equipment.

It was consequently not before the then aristocratic dining hour of twelve at noon, for the 'ignobile vulgus' had already munched their black bread and grey peas at eleven, that the hungry company dispersed, and gave the worthy almoner the opportunity he had long sought for, of approaching and saluting the 'Mariner of the Long Voyage,' as Cabot and such as he were styled *par excellence.*

"You are shortly to leave us, noble captain?"

"On the third day, holy father; so please the winds and waves, and good St. Botolph. We will crave your benediction and your prayers before we depart."

"Most cordially will they be bestowed, captain; and may our Blessed Mary give you a fair voyage, and prosperous traffic."

"Give us a fair voyage, and for the traffic we will risk our reputation on its success;—We have traded with savages before, and shall therefore not fear to encounter the Russian Bear."

"Should he prove uncivil, you go prepared, I see, to give him blow for blow, and hug for hug, though he should be as rough as his own clime."

"You speak sooth, friar;—we can accommodate Master Bruin with a variety of dainties, for we have guns of every caliber to greet him withal, as Culverins, Basilisques, Faulcons, and Sacres; and if he desire a few grapes to his dessert, here be good store of Arquebuze, Caliver and Petronil, with abundance of food for such roaring and fire-eating boys."

"And you appear to have a crew able and willing to back you, gallant captain."

"As fine a set of fellows, friar, as ever brushed salt spray from their beards, or shook hands with Old Boreas on the top of a mountain wave. I would ask no better men to circumnavigate the globe withal, nor bolder spirits to cope with a legion of fiends."

"What think you of our two young townsmen that have taken service with you?"

"Young Alan Witham and Harry Tudenham? They will make good sailors and splendid officers, if their

reckless daring do not cause them to be knocked on the head before their time."

"But, signor, they are wild and graceless dogs, I fear."

"Pshaw!—the mere overflowing of high spirits and noble natures. 'Tis of such stuff that our great men and gallant adventurers are made; and not of the milk-sop foppling, who dares not take a single step beyond his posture master's prescription, lest he ruffle his lace, disorder his doublet, or start some of the points that loop up his delicate person."

"Then you would not be offended to learn that the two young officers I have named have cast eyes of love and fancy upon your beautiful sisters."

"By'r Lady, but they be bold boys:—but, where is the wonder?—or why should I swear? Now I remember me, I brought the boys and girls together, and perhaps at some future day there may be no objection. For the present they and I have other matters to think of, and the girls are young enough to wait."

"You do not then forbid the youths to hope, should they rise in their profession, and acquire wealth and status, becoming the brothers-in-law of the illustrious and princely merchant-mariner, Sebastian Cabot?"

"Oh, oh, Sir Priest, you are their advocate, I see."

"You misconceive me, noble sir. As the confessor and ghostly adviser of your lady mother, I take a deep interest in all that concerns your family; and I was desirous that you should know the state of matters in the household, and also to learn your opinion thereupon, that I might know the better how to regulate my own conduct in regard to the affair in question."

"I stand you debtor, friar, for the friendly feeling you evince, and commend the giddy girls to your kind offices in my absence; for I am well aware, that a harsh mother, whilst she strictly enforces upon her daughters the observance of all the minutiæ of external demeanour, is not unfrequently utterly blind to the more dangerous plots and intrigues that are carrying on under her very nose. Now you, as an occasional visitor and dispassionate observer, will be more likely to discover, and consequently to prevent, any clandestine proceedings to which silly girls are prone. In so doing you will render me important service, nor will you find me ungrateful."

The merchant and the priest then parted, the latter well pleased to find Cabot so well disposed towards the young men, the promotion of whose love affairs was the only means he possessed of silencing them on the subject of his own delinquencies. Having gained the son, his labour with the mother was infinitely less difficult, for Dame Cabot, though a shrewd woman, and a shrew to all the world beside, had a blind confidence in her son, whom she regarded as a being more than mortal, before whom all were bound to succumb both in mind and body.

Father Jerome, who next to her son possessed the highest influence over her, was fully aware of this weak point in the infatuated mother, and had therefore resolved to avail himself of it in bringing about the object he at present had in view. He accordingly sought an opportunity that evening, after vespers, of holding a long conference with the old lady, and by strongly insisting upon the favourable opinion of her son towards the young men, succeeded in softening down her prejudice against them, which it must be confessed was considerably helped

out by the knowledge that the obnoxious invaders of her quiet and orderly *ménage*, would in a day or two be careering far away over the dark blue waters, whence neither their voices nor vagaries could disturb her. Her spleen, however, was so far abated that she admitted them to the freedom of her house and home until their departure, and graciously allowed them to salute her shrivelled hand in token of reconciliation, on their next admission within the precincts of her mansion.

With a fair field thus prepared for them by their compulsory agent, the young men, thoughtless of the future, were for the time as happy as health and youth could make them.

SEAL OF THE GUILD OF THE BLESSED MARY, BOSTON.

CHAPTER V.

"My sailor, so rough, and so fearless, at sea,
"When the moment of peril is past,
"Is all that is loving and tender to me,—
"Oh God! bring him safe through the threatening blast"
ANON.

THERE was many an aching heart and many a tearful eye amongst the fair maidens of Boston, on the day that witnessed the departure of Cabot and his flotilla, for several vessels belonging to the port, manned by the bold and adventurous native seamen, were fitted out to accompany the expedition, and consequently many a young tar in the lower walks of life, besides our two lovelorn heroes, left behind them fond hearts and fair bosoms to pray for their welfare and to sigh for their return. Thus every boat load of adventurers, that took its final passage down the haven, was escorted by a number of small skiffs, each containing one fair Niobe or more, whose father, brother, or one more dear to her than either, was about to embark in what was then deemed a long and dangerous voyage.

These dismal accompaniments of the embarkation were however by no means its most prominent features, for a band of music in a large boat led the van, playing lively

and triumphant airs, which were responded to by hearty cheers from those that followed. Every boat had a flag at its bows, and I fear I must add, one or more drunken men, singing and huzzaing in wild concert with the music. Salutes were fired from every vessel in the harbour, as they passed along, and at intervals loud cheers greeted them from the crowds that thronged the banks on either hand, while from the steeples of St. Botolph's and St. John's Churches reverberated far and wide the merry peals of the bells. Oh! it was a day to be remembered through the longest life, as one of gaiety and excitement seldom witnessed by the sober citizens of Boston.

All this noise and display were however lost upon the throbbing hearts of the tender demoiselles, Martha and Florence Cabot, nor were the wild gallants they loved insensible to the pang of a first separation from a first love, whose image, whatever the world may make of us afterwards, ever lives in the mind, the idol of memory.

'Twas in the tapestried chamber, where the abundant fragments of a large breakfast were still scattered over the spacious tables, that our two young adventurers still loitered to take a last farewell of their lady loves; all the other guests having departed to escort Cabot himself to his boat, and the two beautiful girls utterly overwhelmed with trouble at the loss of their gallant lovers, gave full vent to their grief, and wept upon their shoulders, responding only in broken sobs to the repeated kisses and reiterated vows of unalterable and undying love, with which the youths tried to comfort them.

"Nay, Flory, my heart's jewel, doubt not but I shall return, true in heart, as safe in body; and then, blow

fair—blow foul, you shall be my bonny bride. I will then have a bark of my own,—you shall be my first lieutenant, and we will be as happy as the day is long, whilst we dance over the merry waves, whatever course we steer."

Now this was a very comfortable speech, and the fair Hebe that hung upon his shoulder, raised her tearful eyes with bright beams of love and confidence to his;—and he knew that she was comforted, and with a parting embrace bade her adieu, and hurried after his comrade. Alan had already reached the wharf and answered to the repeated calls for himself and Tudenham to take their places in the last boat, which only waited their arrival to push off.

And they are gone, and carry with them the warmest love and kindest affections of two young and inexperienced hearts, that were doomed never to forget them.

So true it is, that love, although the business of a woman's life, is but the amusement of man's leisure,—it may be added, the solace of his hours of repose,—which the stern realities of every day life presently smother, and obliterate from his mind until some fond memorial recalls long-forgotten scenes, and the fairy forms that peopled them, and then the original impression, mellowed perchance by the fancy hues of distance, revives with redoubled force, and the vagrant swain returns to his duty, and redeems past neglect by the entire devotion of his heart to the tender object of his passion.

Such was the case with the young men of our tale, for the bustle of getting under way, the necessity of action, the excitement of danger, the novelty of the enterprize,

and the pleasure of command, soon resumed their empire in those breasts, in which a few days of leisure had kindled such a flame of tender passion; and the fair young creatures whose hearts throbbed so highly for them, were soon forgotten in the turmoil of nautical life, or remembered only in the lonely midnight watch, when all was still save the remorseless dash of billows.

Months passed away but brought no news of the expedition. At length word arrived that one of vessels had returned to London, but which it was, or what had become of the rest of the fleet no one knew. The state of suspense became terrible both for those, whose friends had joined the expedition, and for those whose wealth was embarked in the venture.

It came at last, a lone and desolate bark, its bulwarks battered in, its cordage rent, its sails in tatters, and its haggard crew a ghastly set of shadowy ghosts, whom toil, danger and famine, had reduced to skeletons. And for their cargo that was to realize the golden dreams of the speculators,—what was that? Vain hope!—the shattered hull was water-logged, and contained nothing but empty casks and the carcasses of some scores of drowned rats, which had been suffocated in their stronghold, the sides of the leaky vessel.

But what said the crew? Alas! poor fellows, they told the usual tale of rough waves and heavy seas, foul winds and midnight squalls, dangerous coasts and hostile natives, with a sad catalogue of incessant labour and watching; of comrades cut off by the savages on one coast, of others washed off the deck on another, and all the catastrophes incidental to unfortuate voyages.—Of their consort ships, or the commander in chief, they

knew nothing; having been separated from the fleet in a gale of wind off the Naze of Norway, which they had never been able to rejoin.

Three years passed away, and nothing more was heard of Cabot, or his Russian Company, except uncertain reports of sundry letters that passed between the gulled merchants of Boston, and the agents of the Italian adventurer, apparently to the satisfaction of neither party.

It was a fine evening in the beginning of October,—the curfew had just ceased tolling, and the careful warden had just raised the draw-bridge, that formed the centre of the wooden convenience that then crossed the Witham, and had seen his halberdiers at their posts, when a party of horsemen clattered rapidly up to the closed port on the west side of the river, and loudly demanded a passage over. They were answered only by the presentation of some dozen arquebuses, and an order to draw off, and not to disturb the town at so unseasonable an hour, for, truth to tell, custom had rendered the curfew toll the general signal for retirement with all honest and orderly burghers.

The party thus frustrated bestowed a few oblique blessings upon the recusants, and then turned their horses' heads in the direction they had come. They had not however proceeded far when four of the number alighted, and after directing the others where to bestow the horses, descended to the river, where they made free with the first skiff they could find, and presently paddled themselves over.

Their motions, however, had not passed unobserved, and on landing they were consequently immediately surrounded by the town guard, armed with sword, halbert,

and petronel, and bearing burning cressets or torches. Resistance was vain, and they were therefore hurried away to the warden's lodge, near the church gate. Here on shewing who they were, they were permitted to retire for the night to the goodly hostel, known by the sign of the Peacock, the precaution being taken to place one of the town-guard at the door of the inn, to prevent the egress of the strangers, and the consequent disturbance of the sober denizens.

'Twas a lovely morning that succeeded the evening we have described, and Dame Cabot, whose temper increasing years and infirmities had not improved, was up very early, with no other apparent motive than to disturb the delightful slumbers of those who slept more soundly than herself; for she was one of those unfortunate beings, who, so to say, was never happy but when she was miserable herself, and occupied in making all about her the same.

"Up, up, ye idle hussies, your wheels should have been going for this hour. Up, I say, or the sun will shine upon your drowsy heads still in bed. The curfew has long since rung out its last chime, and all the town has been a-stir for this hour."

Such was the morning salutation of the amiable lady to her daughters, as she shook, with violence, the door of their sleeping chamber. The young ladies were at the moment wrapt in elysian dreams of by-gone happiness,—of gallant young tars, sweet kisses, and the gentle murmurs of whispered love in the nut walks of the garden, the "leves susurri sub noctem," when the harsh voice of mamma put all their fairy visions to flight, and recalled them to the dull realities of every day life.

Hastily induing their loose morning dresses,—for why should they bestow time and care upon their toilet when they had none to admire their finery or praise their beauty,—they descended to the breakfast, at which their notable mother was already seated, and which for the gratification of modern belles we will describe, whilst the old lady reads her daughters another lecture on early rising.

The comestibles set forth for the morning repast, consisted of one loaf of brown bread upon a wooden trencher, two manchets, or small rolls of white bread, one for the old lady's peculiar eating, the other between her two daughters;—a quart of beer, a quart of wine; —be not alarmed, good economists, the wine was scarcely preferable to the beer, and the latter was sour;—two pieces of salt fish, six baconed herrings, and a dish of sprats.

This we transcribe from the veritable family record now before us, and can therefore safely recommend it to the imitation of any good housewife, who may feel disposed to follow the example of so celebrated and notable a manager as Dame Cabot.

Scarcely had the poor girls consumed one herring each, when Dame Grundy, a pestilent old gossip, and a great crony of Dame Cabot's, bustled into the hall, big with important news, which she was burning with impatience to retail to her neighbour. Her account was extraordinary both in matter and manner, and was to the following effect.

"That during the night the town had been beset by several hundreds of marauders from Deeping Fen, and had only been preserved from destruction by the gallantry

of the bridge-ward and town guard, who after a violent contest had succeeded in throwing some scores of the assailants into the stream, and raising the draw-bridge, while successive vollies were fired at each party from opposite sides of the river. That the robbers finding themselves foiled at the bridge drew off, but succeeded in crossing the river below, which they did in twenty large boats, but were so fiercely opposed on landing by the valiant halberdiers, that they surrendered at discretion. That the whole body of invaders were secured in the dungeon, with the exception of the two leaders, who turned out to be noblemen, and who were consequently taken under a strong guard to the Royal Hostel known by the sign of the Peacock." All this the old lady related in her own peculiar style, with many curious illustrations, which I have taken the liberty to condense, as the verbatim relation would have filled a volume.

The wonder at this strange event had been duly expressed,—the gossip had departed,—the matron had returned to her vocation of scolding her maids, and her two lovelorn yet lovely daughters had returned to their hum-drum task at the spinning wheel, when they were startled by a tap at the chamber door. It half opened, and, as in time past, presented to their astonished gaze the merry countenance of Harry Tudenham, and peeping over the little man's head, that of Alan Witham. In an instant the lovers were locked in each others' embrace.

Dame Cabot was at the time up to her elbows in the meal tub, and therefore could not have disturbed their joyous meeting had she known it was taking place, which happily she did not. But while she was yet in the midst of her culinary preparations, her kind communi-

cative neighbour returned with a fresh budget of news, and penetrated open-mouthed into the kitchen, where she resumed her narrative in the following strain.

"Aye, by St. Ursula, 'tis the strangest thing I ever heard."

"What is the matter now, Dame Grundy?" said Dame Cabot.

"Do pray give me a glass of your canaries. I am quite overcome. It is such an extraordinary affair."

After receiving the glass of *liqueur*, the usual price she exacted for her information, she continued,

"The robbers I told you of, Dame Cabot, after all prove to be no robbers at all, and the two principals are —who do you think?—no other than your quondam friends and tormentors, Harry Tudenham and Alan Witham, the former by the demise of his uncle and brother transformed unto the Right Honourable Lord Tudenham, and the latter into Sir Alan Witham, of Witham Hall, Skirbeck. Such is the information my good man has just brought me, for I sent him out to learn the particulars, and he met the whole party leaving the Warden's Lodge, having been freely discharged by that gallant officer, as good men and true."

"This is strange news indeed, Dame Grundy, if it be true."

"I wonder if the lovers, formerly so zealous, will remember in their greatness the mistresses of their more humble days? I fear me, not. Their journey down is of course to take possession of the estates that fall to them in right of inheritance, but I doubt much whether you will see them at your house. At any rate it would be kind to conceal the arrival of their run-a-gate lovers

from the poor girls, lest a new disappointment should quite break their hearts."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the distant sound of repeated laughter, which seemed to proceed from the apartment of the two poor young ladies, whom the kind Mrs. Grundy pitied so much. The two gossips pricked up their ears at this, and proceeded together directly to the room in question, where they beheld the parties as happy as heart could wish.

The two young men instantly flew to meet Dame Cabot, and greeted her with all their wonted enthusiasm, nor was the old lady a little pleased or proud with the attentions of the fortunate youths she had formerly regarded so obliquely.

In justice to our heroes we must here state, that the sincere pleasure of the meeting so fully possessed their minds, that all remembrance of the change that fortune had wrought in their favour was entirely forgotten by them, and the first intimation that the young ladies received of the rank of their lovers was from their mother's addressing them as "My Lord," and "Sir Alan." In the course of the ensuing fortnight, the names of Martha and Florence Cabot were merged in those of the Ladies Witham and Tudenham.

Great were the rejoicings that celebrated this auspicious event, for all the nautical heroes of Boston, and every blue-jacket was a hero on that day, considered themselves bound in duty to pledge the bonny bride of a Son of the Ocean, till they could no longer raise the glass to their thirsty lips, especially as the noble bridegrooms supplied grog enough to have floated a frigate. Even the very chapmen, who in times past had abused

them for their pranks, could now see grace and nobility in every action of the wealthy young men, who might perchance become such excellent customers.

There was however one person, who was by no means so well pleased with the unexpected exaltation and sudden return of his old acquaintances, and this was the former Almoner of the Grey Friary, South End. Father Jerome, who on the demise of the late Prior, had been elected to the vacant chair, on the settlement of Lord Tudenham and Sir Alan Witham in the neighbourhood of Boston, for some time secluded himself from the public eye, and at length, it was said, transferred himself to another house of the same order on the Continent. This tale was not, however, generally believed, for reports were current, (with what foundation we cannot say) that he had entirely dropped the cowl, and was now enacting the part of "mine host" in a decent tavern in London, the landlady of which, though now grown very portly, had a very suspicious likeness to *Mistress Bridget Gadaway.*

Though unsuccessful in this particular voyage, *Cabot's* reputation was too strongly established by his previous and subsequent successful expeditions to suffer much from a single failure. His latter years were spent in peace and honour in the Metropolis, where he died at the age of eighty, leaving behind him a princely fortune, which, on failure of his immediate descendants, was divided between his two sisters.

THE OLD TAVERN;

OR,

A CENTURY AGO.

CHAPTER I.

"What's to do?
"Shall we go see the reliques of this town?"
TWELFTH NIGHT.

Alas! for the destructive besom of modern innovation;—how utterly has it swept away all that rendered our ancient streets and venerable mansions snug and comfortable; sacrificing with unsparing hand individual convenience to that many-headed monster, the public good. Time was, and that not far remote, when the doors of many of the shops in the Market-Place of Boston were covered with small projecting porches, with one or more seats on either side, whereupon the worthy chapmen and their gossips could sit at their ease, and discuss the prevailing topics of the day.

Aye;—they were happy days, when, after taking a chirping cup with a drouthy neighbour, a sober citizen, as he threaded his devious way through the dark streets towards his home, could recreate his exuberant spirits in the spacious gutter, which then in odoriferous luxuri-

ance usurped the greater part of the causeway; and if disturbed in his amusement by the insolent interference of the veteran guardians of the night, could display his valour by cracking some half dozen lanterns, to say nothing of skulls, and afterwards beat a retreat with all the honours; whereas, in these degenerate times, the chances are that his own will be the only head damaged in the fray, and that his body will be taken more care of than either he or his friends may desire.

How fondly does memory recall the faded splendors of by-gone days, when glaring sign-boards protruded from every shop front, and together with the pent-houses that shaded the low windows, frequently compelled the way-farer who boasted a stature above four feet, to quit the narrow foot-path, and take his chance with the ducks in the puddle, those denizens of the mud that have such cause to complain of the aforesaid besom of reform. Nor, *miserabile dictu*, can we now find in the whole circuit of the Market-Place one of those interesting monuments of antiquity, a cobbler's bulk, although it is upon record that some half-dozen have existed there within the memory of man.

The only remnant of the ancient picture that used to greet the eyes of our forefathers, is that pride of the barber-surgeons, the variegated pole; but even this venerable and venerated emblem of chirurgical and barbarous skill is now compelled to veil its glories in the clouds, being fixed so high as to be almost unheeded by the passers-by.

But why should we rake up the ashes of the past,—only to weep over the faded splendours of the good old town of St. Botolph?

And yet the picture of what it once was is so strongly before our mind's eye at the present moment, that we are half inclined to attempt the sketch. In so doing we fear we must descend to the level of common sense, which, however contrary to our nature, we will endeavour to do in the confident hope that our condescension will be duly appreciated.

Few towns perhaps have undergone a greater change within the last century than Boston; much of which indeed has taken place within the memory of the oldest of its present inhabitants.

The now spacious Market Place, surrounded on all sides by large and elegant shops, commanding a fine view of St. Botolph's magnificent and cathedral-like church, and bounded on the western extremity by superb assembly rooms,[a] a beautiful iron bridge, and commodious parade, was at the time of which we write, scarcely one-fourth of its present size,—badly paved, worse lit, and begirt on all hands by irregular and unsightly buildings, many of which strutted forward from their more retiring neighbours, with no other apparent object than that of obstructing the foot-path.

In the north-eastern part of the Market-Place stood the Corn, or as it was more commonly called, the Meal Cross, occupying the now vacant space from the end of Strait Bargate to the Green Dragon. It was a light, elegant building, raised three steps above the surrounding level, and supporting a flat roof upon fourteen square stone pillars. In the centre of the roof was a small cupola, protecting from the weather a large bell, by the sound of which the Corn Market was opened and closed, no deal-

[a] Soon, alas! to be Assembly Rooms no more. PRINTER'S DEVIL.

ings before or after the prescribed hours being lawful. On the western side of the Corn Cross stood the Pillory, and at the southwest corner, the Whipping Post; but whether these salutary erections were thus conveniently placed for the exclusive benefit of the Rogues-in-Grain, or "*pro bono publico*," our informant sayeth not![a]

A little to the south of the Corn Cross, and nearly opposite to the Green Dragon, was a horse pond, in which the tanners also washed their skins, thereby giving to an adjoining rise of the ground the name of Skin-Hill. Here too was erected that terror to scolds, the Ducking Stool, a method of quelling *unruly members* which the fastidiousness of modern justice has done away with, to the regret of many an unfortunate Benedict.

Thence to Dolphin Lane was an open space, as at present, in the centre of which, however, securely fixed in the earth, was a ponderous iron bull-ring, to which on high days and holidays the worthy burghers were wont to tether the monarch of the herd, and bait him to madness with fierce dogs, no doubt to their great amusement and edification; a very ancient pastime, but now happily exploded throughout the kingdom.

Opposite to the end of Dolphin Lane stood the Market Cross, a large old building of an oblong form, open below on all sides, and supporting, on stone pillars a spacious Assembly Room, in which most of the public business of the borough was transacted, the lower part being devoted to the general purposes of a Market Cross.[b] The whole was surmounted by a dial and vane,

a The Corn Cross was taken down in 1790.

THOPMSON'S HIST. OF BOSTON.

b Built in 1782, and taken down in 1826.

the only remains of the old Cross that have been preserved, and which now occupy a conspicuous place over the Permanent Library.

On the site of the house at the south end of Fountain Lane, rendered remarkable by the aforesaid dial and vane, formerly stood the Water House, a reservoir to which water was conducted through wooden pipes from the West Fen, and thence distributed by the same means over the town.

Separated from the above by a narrow lane, and occupying a great part of the ground which now forms the

paved part of the promenade within the church yard, stood the Town Gaol,[a] a large dismal looking building, which presented towards the Market Place nothing but an immense sloping roof, its walls being surrounded on all sides by small booths or shops.

At the western end of the gaol, facing the Butchery, stood the old Ostrich Inn, conspicuous for its gallows-like sign-post, and a rude painting of the bird whose name it bore; a house noted for good ale, before quassia and quackery had become such important ingredients in the art of brewing.

The Butchery,[b] a large oblong building of one story, with four windows and a door on each side, stood near the church gate, to the south of the gaol. The principal entrance, which faced towards the market-place, was surmounted by the arms of the borough; and at its north-eastern corner were fixed the Stocks,—an excellent situation, for if a gentleman chanced to be laid by the heels he could amuse his leisure by a general survey of proceedings in the market place. A defective drainage rendered this place a nuisance to the neighbourhood in which it stood.

Near the southern extremity of the Market Place stood the Fish Shambles, a circular building, well adapted for its purpose, and not unsightly, but rendered objectionable by the same causes which operated against the butchery.

A clump of buildings also extended along the western side of the market-place, from the corner of the Angel Inn to the fish shambles, thereby entirely obstructing the

a Taken down in 1720.

b Built in 1707, and taken down in 1790.

direct approach to the bridge, and compelling passengers to make a circuit before they could reach the bridge-foot.

The Bridge then in existence, though thought much of at the time of its erection, was indeed but a *wooden* affair. It consisted of one large stone pier in the centre of the river, and of rudely constructed wooden communications from it to the bank on either side, which shook and bent, to the terror of the passengers, beneath the weight of any heavy carriage that crossed it.

At this time there also flourished near the butchery, at the corner of what is now called Church Lane, the Three Tuns Inn; from which extended southward some half-dozen very old houses, which stood forward into the market-place, about thirty feet in advance of the fine buildings that have succeeded them.

In thus presenting a brief sketch of things as they were in Boston a century ago, we have only been preparing the ground for what is to follow; for we have sundry spirits of the past to call up from the vasty depths of time, and to place in the theatre we have thus decked for their reception; but they are personages of too much dignity to be introduced at the fag-end of a chapter.

CHAPTER II.

"As for us drunken rakes, if we hang or we drown,
"Or are decently poisoned, what loss has the town;
"But to devil good claret, that does so much good,
"Is downright effusion of true Christian blood.

TRANS. OF MARTIAL'S EP.

On the eastern side of the market-place, adjoining Crown Court, and a little to the south of the old market-cross, formerly stood—nay, still stand—though entirely remodelled, two ancient houses,—one, the shop of a flax-dresser, and the other that of a breeches-maker, trades of paramount importance amongst our great-grandmothers, and grandfathers, when the former spun their own yarns,[a] and the latter incased their substantial persons in durable buck-skin.

Beneath the shop window of the breeches-maker, whose name was Geoffery Mudge, was a cobbler's bulk, inhabited by as merry a son of St. Crispin as ever hammered lapstone, and who rejoiced in the euphonious

a Does the author mean to insinuate that the dear old ladies of the present day have lost the art of spinning yarns?

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

appellation of Aristobulus Hunks,—though more commonly called Toby Hunks, and by his enemies, the mischievous boys who delighted to pelt him with mud in his snug stall,—Old Hunks.

These worthy tradesmen, and their neighbour the flax-dresser, whose name was Robert Short, were very great cronies, and in their frequent sessions in the porch that projected over the door-way of the breeches-maker's shop, were in the practice of settling, not only the affairs of their neighbours, but of the nation at large; yet, strange as it may appear, neither the town nor the nation appeared the better for their counsel.

The only party, indeed, who was said to benefit by their long, loud and pragmatic discussions, was "mine host" of the Crown Tavern, in the court adjoining, the proximity of whose tap often tempted the speakers to adjourn the debate when it became dry, to the kitchen settle of old Larry Sackbutt, where they had the advantage of an enlarged audience and a foaming tankard to inspirit their eloquence.

On a fine evening at the latter end of April, 1736, this sapient trio had just assembled at their usual post, the door of goodman Mudge, and the chat had commenced with its usual energy, when their attention was suddenly drawn to the noise of a rabblement around the pump at the southern front of the market-house, the centre and object of which was a man in black, of the class called shabby-genteel, whose declamatory gestures, at a distance, induced the idea that he was haranguing the ragged urchins around him, but on a nearer approach it was discovered that he was apostrophising that well known public character, the pump itself.

The orator, whose years could not be more than five and twenty, with unsteady steps reeling from one side to the other, yet preserving throughout a drunken gravity of countenance that well consorted with the mock solemnity of his address, proceeded in the following strain.

"Thou most pernicious bane of generous liquor,—I curse thee by my gods, but especially by him of the purple face, whose lips are red with the blood of the luscious grape. Thou art not only a knave of the first water thyself, but the source—the fountain-head of knavery in others. How many a vinter, whose soul is now roasting below for his crimes, hast thou assisted to rob the sober citizen, who whilst sipping his humble pint after the fatigues of the day, little dreamt he was honouring a draught upon the town pump."

"Ah;" he continued, "it makes my heart ache, to think how many a pipe of glorious wine has been bedeviled by thy agency; and its flavour and reputation utterly ruined." Then turning to the gaping mob around him, he resumed;—"Such, good people, are the consequences of evil associations. Wine and Water! Horrible conjunction! Let me, my dear friends, most affectionately urge upon you never to commit so impious, so preposterous a folly as to dilute good wine, or you will most assuredly be ———."

How far his affectionate sympathies might have carried the inspired speaker we cannot say, for at this moment an unlucky imp of a butcher's boy, more mischievous than his fellows, gave a stout tug at the skirt of his coat, and brought the orator upon his seat of honour in a puddle beneath the very pump he had lately treated so opprobriously, and which, as it were in spite, now began to cascade the prostrate tippler with the hated element.

CHAPTER III.

"I have kept the night watch, where she chiefly is said
"To roam by the ruinous stair;
"I should not have trembled, I should not have fled—
"For I could have faced her there." THE WHITE LADY.

After witnessing the catastrophe described in the foregoing chapter, the worthy trio, already introduced, forthwith betook themselves to their usual retreat, namely, the kitchen of the Crown Tavern. Whither we will make bold to follow them, and minute down a part of their colloquy.

"It is a sad thing to see his father's son in such a situation!" said the breeches-maker.

"So clever and learned, and yet so dissolute and reckless," added the cobbler.

"The greatest clerks are not always the wisest men." growled Bob Short, the flax-dresser.

"And yet 'tis a mad wag when in his vagaries;" said Hunks, "as I know to my cost."

"'Tis good to be merry and wise," added Short.

"He was born to high expectations, and nurtured in the lap of luxury, until that fatal lawsuit stripped him of his birthright, and cast a blight over the fortunes of

his house. From that day he has been a lost man, reckless alike of fortune and of fame; and anxious only to down care in the wine flask." said a small limb of the law, distinguishable by the choice selection of terms of speech.

"There's many a slip—you know the proverb," said Short.

"His proud stomach," resumed the breeches-maker, "could never condescend to an honest trade, I suppose, if he were to starve."

"Hungry dogs will eat dirty puddings," said Short. "Or," continued Mudge "I would willingly instruct him in the art and mystery of converting buck-skin and cordevan into breeches and gloves."

"And I the still more important vocation of a cordwainer," added Hunks.

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins," said Short, who was somewhat of a cynic, as well as a retailer of old proverbs. "Ye are vastly considerate, neighbours mine, and I doubt not were altogether uninformed of the fact that the poor fellow you so much commiserate, is already provided for."

"As how, Master Short?"

"Why, though all the world seem to have turned their backs upon poor Harry Fuddle, the vicar, who as master of the Grammar School had the care of his education, has never deserted him, and together with Dr. Stukeley, the learned antiquary, have employed their interest to procure him an appointment abroad. A letter arrived yesterday from our member, the Honourable Albemarle Bertie, informing Mr. Rigby that his application had been successful, and that the young man must prepare to proceed to India forthwith.

"The doctor and vicar came up just as we left." said the breeches-maker.

"I wonder what the learned gentlemen thought of their hopeful protegé;—he was in a nice pickle to present himself before his patrons," observed Hunks. "Worse reprobates however than Harry Fuddle have made good men in the end."

"Of a ragged colt comes a good horse;" said Short.

"Well, brethren, suppose we drink his speedy reformation, and better luck in foreign parts."

"With all my heart." echoed round the room; and a dozen tankards were raised to as many pairs of lips.

There was here a break in the conversation, during which most of the company had their cups replenished, and all puffed away at their pipes as if to conceal their blank countenances from the vacant gaze of their unoccupied fellows. At length a small shrill voice, in tremulous accents, as if alarmed at the noise itself had made, was heard to proceed from a remote corner of the room, in which was ensconced a very diminutive barber; and this was the tenor of his remark.

"'Tis a very mysterious affair—the sudden and unaccountable fall of a house once so celebrated in this town and neighbourhood!"

"Mysterious indeed!" again echoed round the room.

"To say that the heir of the first family in Boston, some thirty years by-gone, is now a beggar and a vagabond in the streets thereof!"

"There is no fence for ill-fortune." growled Short.

"Aye, aye, there are strange tales afloat about the first cause of their ruin." said one of the sages, shaking his head significantly.

"One thing is certain, that their old house near the Chantry is haunted," whispered the trembling barber. Whereupon all eyes were turned upon the poor little man, and as the steadfast gaze of so many substantial ghosts glared upon him through the clouds of smoke that enveloped them, he seemed visibly to diminish, and as it were to shrink into himself.

"Prithee, tell us, neighbour Sudds," said Hunks, "hast thou ever seen the White Lady that is said to flit up and down the principal stair-case?"

"Nay;—heaven forefend!" almost screamed the barber. "No, no, thank God, I never saw any thing; but old Job Tapham, the butler, who has lived in the house twelve years, with three successive families, and who comes to my shop to be shaved every Saturday afternoon at four o'clock precisely, tells me that strange sights have been seen in the haunted chamber, and on that terrible stair-case. That the other servants have seen blue lights and fleeting shadows suddenly shoot across the hall and along the dark passages, and have heard unearthly noises in the vacant chambers at the southern end of the house, where is a secret apartment that is never opened, but in which there is often heard at midnight such an uproar as if a whole legion of witches were dancing the devil's saraband."

"But what of the white lady?" earnestly enquired one of the attentive hearers.

"Aye, truly I was going to tell you," continued the barber, "that Susan, the housemaid,—you know Susan, neighbour Hunks?"

"Aye, aye; well, what of her?"

'Prithee;—don't be so fierce, Master Aristobulus;—my tale will come in good time. Gentlemen, I have the honour to drink your very good health."

"Curse the fellow. Why doesn't he go on?"

"Well, well,—where was I?—yes,—well you must know that Sukey having forgotten something in the principal chamber, which it was necessary should be attended to, without thinking any thing about ghosts or goblins,—for she's a giddy wench, you know,—about ten o'clock at night ran through the hall and up the stairs; but just as she got on the second landing, who should she meet but the ghost of the murdered 'squire, who rushed by her in his bloody shirt, bearing under his arm the lady in white, whose screams so frightened the poor girl, that letting fall her light, she jumped from the top to the bottom of the stairs, fled across the hall, and fainted outright as soon as she entered the kitchen."

"Ah, ah, ah;—oh, oh, oh;" here bellowed out old Hunks, to the surprise of the company, and the vast indignation of Master Sudds, who rose no less than three inches from his seat, as if he positively contemplated some hostile movement against the cobbler.

"Beg pardon, gentlemen, but I could'nt help having my laugh, for I have heard a very different version of the tale neighbour Sudds has been telling us; and I am much mistaken if Ralph, the footman, and Betty, my lady's maid, could not have explained all the mystery of Sukey's alarm, if they had been so disposed. Strange mistakes some times take place in the dark, and lights will fall from the hands of frightened damsels, we all know."

"There are more ways out of the wood than one." said Short.

"You may say what you will, Master Aristobulus;" said Sudds, sulkily, "but I believe there is more seen and heard in that house than is dreamt of in your philosophy."

"Why, it was but the other day," said the breeches-maker, "that young Master Jeremy's groom, who came to try on a pair of leggins, told me for a fact that after every body is gone to bed, the rats assemble in hundreds in the drawing-room, and have regular contre-dances for the best part of the night; and only last week, old Moggy, the cook, was sitting up late for the return of the butler, who had been sent out of town by his master, when a large rat, bigger than their brindled cat, came and sat on the opposite side of the fire, and began to rub his whiskers and compose himself to enjoy the warmth with as much impudent coolness as puss herself could have done; and when Moggy raised the poker to drive him away, instead of flying, he put himself into attitude as if about to spring at her throat, whereupon the fat old woman dropped the poker, and scampered off to bed, thinking she heard the monster rat at her heels all the way up stairs."

"Truly, what with rats, ghosts, blue lights and white ladies, it is a fear-some house to dwell in!" ejaculated Sudds.

"A fool's bolt is soon shot." said Short. His bolt however fell short of its destination, for the innocent barber did not perceive that it was aimed at him.

The only stranger in company during the previous conversation, was a stout hale man of about fifty, who had the appearance both of a soldier and a traveller, his dress being of stout buff, and of a foreign cut, and

his carriage and bearing altogether military. He had listened in silence to all that had been said, but concealed the impression it made upon him by pulling his broad Spanish hat deeply over his brows, and enveloping his face in a constant cloud of smoke which issued in volumes from his large Turkish pipe.

During the pause which now ensued, he took the hooka from his mouth, and as soon as the smoke had dispersed there appeared to the company a dark red visage, almost covered with bushy beard and whiskers, and large curling mustaches; in the midst of which twinkled two small fierce eyes from beneath a penthouse of shaggy eyebrows, and which glanced rapidly round the room, from face to face of the silent company. At length, with a gruff voice, he slowly enquired;

"Gentlemen, of what family may you have been speaking?"

No one at first dared to answer, not knowing how his reply might be taken by the grim-visaged stranger; but at last Master Hunks ventured to say,

"We were lamenting, Sir, the downfall of the Traffords."

"Of the Traffords?" exclaimed the stranger.

"Yes, Sir, of the Traffords, some years ago a family of great wealth and high repute in this town, the last remaining member of which has been utterly ruined by a long protracted lawsuit, in which the verdict ultimately went against him, and stripped him of his entire patrimony."

"The Traffords utterly ruined!" ejaculated the stranger.

"Past hope." said Hunks.

"All their estates, and the mansion itself, passed into other hands!"

"All."

"But you spoke of a young man by the name of Fuddle."

"Ah!—did I?—He is nevertheless a true Trafford, and Fuddle is only the appellation his late habits have acquired him."

"And is this hopeful springald the only son of the proud and high spirited Francis Trafford, Esquire, whose word was as good as his bond for a hundred thousand pounds?"

"The same. But you seem to know the family, Sir." continued the curious Hunks.

"Why yes;—I have heard of them;—but it is many years ago. I was formerly intimate with one who had been in their service for years, nay from his birth, and who was always talking of them. Hence my knowledge of the family."

All eyes turned upon the speaker, and several exclaimed at once,

"What was his name?"

"His *nom de guerre*, and that to which he answered on muster, was Harry Black; though he was generally called by his comrades Black Harry. I believe he had been known by a different name in his own country. But why do you enquire, my friends?"

"Why you must know, Sir," resumed Hunks, "that about thirty years ago, the then head of the family, George Hildebrand Trafford, the grandfather of the youth we were speaking of, was murdered upon the very stairs, which were the scene of poor Sukey's fright; and

on the following morning, a servant of the family, the supposed murderer, and who in some respects answered the description of your quondam friend, was found to be missing, together with a considerable sum of money, which the deceased gentlemen was known to have had about his person."

"Was he ever taken?"

"No; but the jury that sat upon the body returned a verdict of 'wilful murder against Gilbert Ashton,' the fugitive. He was, however, never afterards heard of."

"Was any body suspected to be his accomplice?"

"There were many rumours abroad on the subject, some of which implicated the young 'squire, but none sufficiently clear to bring the charge home to him, although many believe to this day that he had a guilty knowledge of, if not himself an actor in, the bloody tragedy. But the parties are now all dead, and the truth is known only to Him who knoweth all things."

"Now, listen to me," said the stranger, in a harsh and deep voice, well suited to a tale of blood, "and I will relate the truth of this mysterious affair, which you consider so entirely buried in the womb of time. My former comrade was no other that the run-away Gilbert Ashton, who, whilst lying ill of a wound, received in a drunken frolic at Namur, of which he afterwards died, related to me all the adventures of his life, and amongst others this extraordinary murder, which first launched him a vagabond upon the wide world."

Such a prelude, it will be readily believed, attracted the earnest attention of all his hearers, in so much that half the pipes present ceased to emit the ambient cloud, and even the cups of many remained untasted in their

hands during the whole narration; which he gave in the following words.

"You have probably all heard, that at the time of this occurrence there resided in the family of the Traffords a young lady named Gertrude Walton, a ward of the 'squire's, the daughter of a brother officer deceased, —for the 'squire had served in his youth,—and of very great expectations. She was highly accomplished and exquisitely beautiful,—had a splendid bust,—was tall, elegant, and of a high and noble spirit, worthy of her family, fortune, and personal endowments."

"As might be expected, the society of so charming a woman had its usual effect upon the young 'squire; and corresponding as they did in mind and person, it is not to be wondered at that the lady reciprocated the attachment of such a lover as Francis Trafford."

"Thus far it was well and promised happily, although the father, who could not be ignorant of the existing attachment between the young people, never by word or sign, either approved or disapproved, of a match, apparently every way so eligible and desirable. But whatever view he took of the affair, it is certain that all his arrangements for his son tended to his removal from home, and the obstruction, or at least the delay of the consummation of his long cherished hopes. Hitherto he had strenuously opposed the desire of his son to enter the army, yet now he all at once, unsolicited, obtained an appointment for him, and to render it less exceptionable purchased for him the two steps at once, and at the same time furnished him with *carte blanche* as to his equipments. The young man altogether taken by surprise by this sudden change in his father's policy, had

no plea for now refusing what he had often begged for in vain, however ill-timed he felt the measure, and therefore acquiesced in silence. From many minute points in the conduct of his father, Francis and Gertrude had already divined his opposition to their union; and this final stroke of policy, which was evidently intended to separate them, fully confirmed the idea."

"The young man, loath to quit the society of her he loved, and doubtful of the intentions of his father with regard to his beautiful ward, delayed his departure as long as possible; but the impatience of the old gentleman at length compelled him to tear himself away, and to plunge into all the gaieties and excitements of martial life, a career for which he had long panted, and on which he would have embarked with rapture, but for his recent tender *liaison*."

"He had, however, scarcely began to enter into the spirit of his new position, and to relish the company of his brother officers, when the love-missives of Gertrude, who availed herself of every opportunity to communicate with him, came laden with expressions of mysterious trouble and secret grief, more than were natural to a high minded and sensible woman, who at no distant period had the prospect of seeing her lover again at her feet. Indeed he fancied something extraordinary had occurred since he left home, which she was anxious to reveal to him, yet hesitated for fear of the consequences of the disclosure. This soon became so apparent as to render him quite miserable, and he therefore resolved to obtain leave of absence,—to run down to Boston, and to satisfy himself at once of the truth or falsehood of his surmises."

"This he accordingly did, and on his arrival found his father from home,—he having gone out to dine with a friend,—and Miss Walton ill in bed.

The latter, however, no sooner heard that he was in the house, than she dressed herself, despite the remonstrances of her maid, and insisted upon seeing him. In the interview which followed, she informed him that she had been so miserable since he left home, that she had determined at every risk to quit the house of her guardian, rather than submit to the persecutions she had recently endured; for he was incessantly tormenting her to marry a person whom he had selected for her husband,—a person, whom she could never like,—whom indeed she detested."

"'And who may this wonderful personage be, whom my prudent father has chosen for you, to the prejudice of his only son and heir?"

"'That, Francis, I shall never tell you, lest your impetuosity should lead to consequences the most dreadful, and which might render us wretched for life."

"No entreaties could induce the young lady to declare the name of the person, on whose account she had suffered so much, and for whom his father was so zealous. The young captain and his fair *inamorata* however so well understood each other, that it was arranged between them that they would quit Trafford House together on the morrow, and be joined in the holy bands of wedlock either with or without the old 'squire's consent, which Gertrude seemed to despair of obtaining, although Francis Trafford indulged a hope to the contrary. With this understanding the young couple parted for the night, the lady to her bed, and the young man to await his father's return in the study."

"It was nearly twelve when the old gentleman reached home, and he was then so much excited with wine, that the son doubting the nature of the reception he should experience, avoided an interview, and allowed the servant quietly to see his father to bed, and when all was quiet, about half an hour afterwards, prepared to retire to his own sleeping apartment. In crossing the hall he thought he heard footsteps on the landing of the principal staircase. He listened, and immediately afterwards a door was violently forced, and the screams of a female voice, which he recognised to be that of Gertrude Walton, startled his ear. As quick as thought he ascended the stairs, and was utterly paralized by the sight of his own father in *dishabille*, dragging his betrothed mistress along the floor."

"The furious ravisher no sooner recognised his own son in the intruder, than dropping the insensible lady on the floor, he rushed into his bed-room, the door of which was wide open, and immediately reappeared with a pistol in one hand and a dirk in the other. The former he snappep at his son, who was now kneeling beside the prostrate lady, but the pistol missing fire he flew like a tiger upon him with the dirk. The quick eye and prompt action of the young man however warded off the blow, and a mortal struggle ensued between the father and son, during which the weapon of offence was savagely grappled by both parties, and—but why should I proceed? In that dreadful encounter the veteran ravisher fell by the hand of his own son!"

"Good God!—How horrible!—Is it possible?"—Such were the ejaculations that echoed from mouth to mouth, round the room, at this stage of the narrative.

"Then Ashton was innocent after all?" said Hunks.

"You shall hear," resumed the grim stranger. "During this fearful contest, the unnatural combatants, insensible to every thing but the impulse of their unbridled passions, had inadvertently approached the head of the stairs, down which they both fell headlong. The young man was instantly on his feet again, but it was only to see his father a corpse. In silent horror he hung over the lifeless body, and was only aroused from his stupor by an exclamation of Miss Walton, who having recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen on the first appearance of her lover, now approached the scene of blood, and in piteous accents said,

"Sure he is not dead, Francis!"

"'Dead, Gertrude!" said the wretched son. "Aye, dead,—and by my hand!"

"Here they were both startled by the voice of Gilbert Ashton, who, unobserved, was standing near, and as afterwards appeared had been a witness of the whole catastrophe, having been alarmed at the first cries of the lady, upon which he had instantly left his room, and hurried to the scene of action.'

"'This is a shocking affair, Sir," said the serving man, "but I am witness that you are guiltless."

"'I—guiltless—Gilbert?—but what will the world say and think?"

"'Why truly, Sir, I fear that is a very doubtful question, and it behoves you immediately to consider how you will act. I think you had better fly, and keep yourself out of harm's way until the matter is put fairly before the public."

" ' Gilbert, I will not fly, whatever may be the consequences !—No, I will face a jury of my countrymen, and abide the issue of their verdict, though it should condemn me to the gallows."

" ' Which, with permission, Sir, I think it is very likely to do. The law is at all times a very uncertain and dangerous enemy to grapple with upon the most favourable grounds; but what are the circumstances under which you propose to commit yourself to its tender mercies? I pray you to consider them for a moment, and to see how dark your case appears. You have returned home this evening without any ostensible cause, after a very brief absence, and the murder takes place immediately after your arrival;—the demise of your father places you in instant possession of immense property, and it is well known that your habits are such as to require more liberal supplies than you have hitherto been allowed;—it is also notorious that you have not latterly lived on the same friendly footing with the deceased as heretofore;—these with other incidental evidence that may be brought forward, will be sufficient to convince the jury and the public of your guilt, and to hurry you to an ignominious end amidst the execrations of the multitude."

" ' You draw a fearful picture, Gilbert, of what awaits me:—but it cannot be helped."

" ' Oh, fly, dearest Francis,—fly instantly;—if not for your own—for mysake." said the weeping girl, as she hung upon his shoulder, and looked up with imploring eyes into his face, not a muscle of which moved, all being apparently frozen with horror.

" ' Now, listen to me," said Ashton, " you are my foster brother, Mr. Francis Trafford, and have ever been

a loving master to me; you will also by this event be rendered rich and independent, and are therefore in a position to grant with ease what I shall ask. I have long had a desire to quit the peaceful life I have hitherto led, and have an ambition to be a soldier of fortune in foreign parts, like my father before me. Such has long been my nightly dream and my daily aspiration;—I have now a good opportunity of commencing the career I pant for, and of importantly serving my foster brother at the same time. Give me here five hundred pounds, and your best horse, and I will fly instantly to Wainfleet, embark in a smuggling boat I wot of, and 'ere morning will be out at sea, far beyond pursuit."

"'And you propose that I should accompany you," said Trafford.

"'Not so, Sir.—You are but dull at apprehending the drift of my plan. I am fully bent upon joining myself, in a foreign land, and under a new name, to the yager corps of some Rhenish Baron or German Prince, and, that once effected, what matters to me the good or evil opinion of the inhabitants of Boston? Let them say, an' they will, that Gilbert Ashton murdered his master, and then fled with the plunder his guilt procured him. In short I consent to allow you to throw all the odium of this disastrous affair upon me, and thereby to enable you to retain all the advantages of your position, together with your present fair name and unsullied reputation. What say you to my plan now, Sir?"

"Trafford did not immediately answer, but presently after, as if his mind had at once embraced and appreciated the whole scheme, he turned suddenly upon his foster-brother, and grasping his hand nervously, exclaimed,

" ' It is nobly proffered, Gilbert, and I embrace your offer with all my heart. You will thus render me infinitely your debtor. But time presses, and it behoves us not to loose a moment. Follow me into the study, and I will furnish you with whatever you desire."

" ' Gertrude," he continued, " return to your chamber. Gilbert and I will be able, I trust, to avert the consequences of this unhappy business better than could at first have been anticipated."

" This address of Trafford's, relieving her mind from the intense anxiety under which it had hitherto laboured, allowed her thoughts to revert to herself, and she now became sensible how thinly she was clad, being exactly in the state in which she had been dragged from her couch, whereupon with burning blushes mantling over her face and bosom she retreated to her room."

" A short time sufficed to arrange the preliminaries of the projected flight, to start the putative murderer on his voluntary exile, and to place the involuntary parricide on his sleepless bed. After which the silence of death reigned through that house of blood."

CHAPTER IV.

" Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
" Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
" Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
" And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
" Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff,
" Which weighs upon the heart ?" MACBETH.

At this point of his tale the speaker stopped to take breath, and all present breathed more freely, as if relieved by the cessation of the exciting narratave. Tankards were emptied and replenished, as if to provide courage for the sequel of the tragedy; and some two or three of the company, who had a wholesome dread of the curtain lecture that awaited their tardy return home, slunk out of the room with the stealthy step and hang-dog look of a Jerry Sneak.

As for the stranger he seemed fully bent upon making up for the time he had lost in drinking and smoking, by tossing off glass after glass, and blowing such dense clouds from his huge pipe as soon filled the room, and rendered it difficult for the guests to distinguish each other's features. The rapidity with which the grim unknown swallowed tumbler after tumbler full of a strong mixture of brandy, lime-juice, and *sirup de Bourdeaux*,

astonished the more modest tipplers around him, and conduced not a little to increase the awe with which they already regarded him.

Oh, but he was a jewel of a customer for a jolly vintner!—for as he received each smoking glass from the attentive Sackbutt, he ever threw down a broad piece in payment, which the obsequious landlord, with a ready smile, quietly slipped into his breeches pocket, and securely buttoned up in that sacred depository. Nor was this the only way in which the conduct of his unwonted guest promoted the interest of 'mine host,' for his other customers, influenced perhaps by the example of the "lion of the evening," were unusually deep in their potations, and consequently liberal in their calls upon the tap.

At last Master Hunks began to grow impatient for the rest of the story, and ventured to give a hint upon the subject.

"This is a very strange tale you have been telling us, Master Traveller; yet many things I have before heard bear out the truth of what you say."

"Truth?" growled the ominous voice from behind its shroud of smoke. "Do you intend to impeach my veracity?"

"By no means, Sir;" said the cobbler, trembling in his shoes, "only what you have told us makes us curious to hear more."

"Why, you must be better informed of the after-clap than I." said the stranger.

"By no means," resumed Hunks. "All I remember,—I was then just out of my time,—is, that there was a great talk about the shocking murder of 'Squire Trafford by his serving man, and that warrants were issued for his

apprehension. It is only since the death of the captain, and the downfall of the fortunes of his house, that reports have been circulated to his prejudice, which in some measure tally with your account."

"Well," said the stranger with a grim smile, "what you say proves that the plan was well conceived and successfully carried out. And after the jury had given their verdict against the run-away servant, no one, I presume, dared to sully the fair fame of the proud, wealthy, and gallant Captain Francis Trafford."

"He soon after left the town, I believe," observed Mudge, "and in a few months news arrived that he had married Miss Walton; nor do I think he ever returned to this part of the country, for all his property and estates were entrusted to the stewardship of Jeremy Holdfast, the lawyer."

"But this boy of whom you were speaking—this Harry Fuddle—what have been his fortunes?"

"He was, I believe, the only issue of the marriage in question;" responded the before mentioned dapper limb of the law, "and at the age of five years was brought hither by his father's agent, and by him transferred to the care of the master of the Grammar School, with whom he continued until he went to college. He quitted the university about three years ago, on the demise of his father, but scarcely had he taken possession of his patrimony, when the verdict in the long pending suit, "Doe on the demise of Walton *versus* Trafford," was given against him; and what with the properties involved in that cause, and the legal expenses, he found himself a beggar. From that day, as I before said, he has been a lost man, squandering with reckless profusion

the small wreck of his fortune in debauchery, as if resolved to let fate do her worst by him."

"And faith she seems to have taken him at his word." said Short.

"Had Ashton any communication with the captain after his flight?" enquired the curious Hunks.

"Communication,—did you say?—Aye, indeed had he, for what with women, wine, and wassail, Black Harry soon ran through the money he started with, and did not hesitate to apply to the same source for a fresh supply. This he did so frequently, and with such urgent importunity, that the captain began to tire of supplying one, whose enormous and incessant demands seemed only to increase with the liberality of his remittances. He therefore sold his commission, and retired with his lady *in cognito* into Italy, in the hope of escaping from the insatiable blood sucker that had fixed his fangs upon him. In this respect his object was answered, for he baffled the enquiries of Ashton for several years, during which his unhappy lady, who was rendered miserable by the constant dread of the ultimate exposure of her beloved husband's accidental delinquency, was delivered of a son, whose birth she survived but a few months, at which period she died raving mad, a diseased mind co-operating with an enfeebled frame to crush the vital spark. Such was the end of a union, which might be said to have been cemented with a father's blood."

"After the death of his lady, the unfortunate Trafford, harrassed at once by a guilty conscience, and the dread of discovery by the extortionate being who was now the sole depositary of his fatal secret, seems to have divided his time between the superstitious observances of the Romish

Church, to which he had latterly conformed, and the gaming house. In the one, it is to be presumed, that he sought consolation for the secret pang that rankled in his bosom, and in the other an escape from intrusive thought.'"

SEAL OF THE GUILD OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, BOSTON.

CHAPTER V.

"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" 1 KINGS 21. xx

'LATE one night as Trafford was pursuing his accustomed path along one of the dark streets of Rome, in his passage from the shrine of "Our Lady of Sorrow" to that of "Lady Fortune," his ears were startled by a wild chaunt in his native language. It seemed to proceed from a female figure, that was crouching down at the corner of the street, close to the image of some neglected saint, whose grim and weather-worn statue was illuminated by a couple of dim tapers. Such a sound in such a place, and at so unsual an hour, induced him to stop and listen attentively; and as he did so, he became as it were rooted to the spot with horror, for the words, wild and unmeasured as they were, entered his very soul. They were as follow,

"Beware, beware
Of the blood-stain'd stair,
For the shades of the dead
Are wandering there

"The murder'd sire
In robe of fire,
And the lady in white,
At the dead of the night

" Will still repair
To the blood-stair,
' Till the parricide's doom
Send them back to the tomb.

" And a ban on their race
Of the darkest disgrace,
Shall banish them far
From that desolate place,

" ' Till their recreant son
By his blood shall have won
The maiden, that brought
His high fortunes to nought."

" I have heard that ditty before." said Hunks, with a sagacious nod to his fellows, without however interrupting the narrative of the stranger, who proceeded thus,

' Scarcely had the melancholy songstress finished the lay, when the captain flew towards her, and dragging her to the light, examined her features with a savage earnestness that might have alarmed her, but his manner had no such effect upon the wretched being that now hung upon his arm, apparently too weak to support herself.'

" Ah, Francis Trafford," said she, " art thou come at last. Methought that my song would be my own requiem, but since it is thine, I care not now who sings mine."

" Woman, be thou of earth or hell, I conjure thee to tell me how thou knowest me, what is the import of thy infernal rant, and why thou hast now crossed my path ?"

" Am I indeed so utterly changed, Frank, that thou can'st not recognise in the fallen creature before thee, the once gay Mirabel—the once beautiful and admired mistress of thy proud but false hearted father ;—nay more, the nurse that so often has fondled thee on her lap, and as a boy loved thee with almost a mother's love ? But" added the beldam, with a chuckle of gratified malice, " Mirabel is not the only flower that has been blighted by premature decay and ruin. Oh, no ! my

curse has indeed overtaken the proud race of him that wronged, and then spurned his humble kinswoman. Aye, aye, he too is gone to his black account, and thou, Frank, knowest how. Oh, how happy hadst thou been if thine own heart's blood had formed the purple stream that trickled its slow way down the fatal stairs from the veins of him that gave thee life!"

"Hag!—dar'st thou insinuate?—I will tear thy false tongue from thy malignant throat."

"But thou can'st not gainsay the truth, Frank. The hoary letcher got but his just meed, and, had it come from any hand but thine, I should say it was well done. Ah! how I would have gloried in the act, had fate reserved for me so dear a morsel of revenge!"

"Thou art mad, woman,—utterly mad;" said Trafford, gently placing her on the seat from which he had raised her, and preparing to depart, but she clung convulsively to his arm, and said,

"Frank Trafford, if you leave me at this crisis I will precipitate the doom that hangs over thy head. Hear me out, or by the hell to which we are both hastening, I will cut short thy brief career, and thou shalt go down to the grave with the malison of all good men."

"Speak, woman, for I listen," said Trafford, "but press not a desperate man, for I am dangerous, and feel strongly disposed to throttle thee on the instant."

"I fear thee not, Francis Trafford. Thou hast too sincerely repented of one death, to be rashly the cause of another."

'Trafford averted his face at this saying, and muffling himself in his cloak, leant back against the pedestal of the statue, as if resigned to hear with patience all that

his extraordinary communicant might have to say. After some moments' silence, he turned to observe her, when he perceived that she had sunk down upon the pavement with all the appearances of death. He raised her, felt her pulse, chaffed her temples, but she hung a lifeless mass upon his arm. With the perversity to which human nature is so often prone, he was now most eager to recall to life her, whose death a few minutes before he had so earnestly desired, and so savagely contemplated. Having called assistance, he had her conveyed to his house, and, on the application of proper restoratives, she soon showed signs of life. It was, however, many days before exhausted nature was so far recruited as to give assurance that she was out of immediate danger.'

'Her tale is soon told. Left an orphan in the flower of her youth and beauty, with pride and accomplishments far beyond her fortune, for she had been thus superlatively educated because she was remotely connected with a high and wealthy family, all her ideas took a flight beyond the sphere in which she was justly entitled to move, and the natural consequence was, that in aspiring too high she fell altogether below the honourable respectability to which she might fairly have attained.'

'The patronage of her great relatives, the Traffords, extended no farther than to admit her into their family in one of those doubtful and intermediate situations, half menial, half genteel, but without the comforts and privileges of either condition. In this capacity she led a life of drudgery and contempt, until her beauty caught the eye of her unprincipled master. From that time her position was changed, and however the servants might whisper and sneer behind her back, they were

forced to pay her every public demonstration of respect. This connection commenced previously to the death of her paramour's wife, and no doubt hastened the poor lady's end, for her faithless husband compelled her to admit his mistress to her society and table, under the plausible pretext of relationship. During the earlier stages of this illicit amour, her lover never hesitated to soothe the outbreaks of remorse to which the beautiful Mirabel was subject, by positive promises of marriage, which he never intended to perform. At length being quite wearied with her importunities, he took her with him abroad, having previously vowed to wed her in a foreign land, and to bring her home again his lawful wife. To this proposal the then lovely and confiding girl most joyfully assented, and with a light heart and happy smile accompanied him to Florence. In that city he purposely quarrelled with her, and when with the high spirit of a spoiled beauty she retorted upon him, he left her with expressions of the utmost contempt, vowing never to see her more. That vow he kept, and the forlorn damsel found too late that she had indeed lost her lover, and all hope of reclaiming him. Pride and anger for some time sustained her, but gradually there came over her drooping spirit all the desolation of desertion in a strange land, and that too by the man on whom she had lavished her first love, however unadvisedly. In the first paroxism of grief and anguish she attempted self-destruction, but in that land of myrtle bowers and moonlight serenades, a young and beautiful *Inglesa* could not fail to find a friend and comforter in her hour of affliction. Suffice it, that she was comforted; yet she never forgot or forgave the man that had so cruelly wronged her. Various were

the fortunes she had experinced since that fatal era of her destiny ; but of late years, during which both beauty and health had forsaken her, she had fallen into so low a condition, as to be forced to earn a precarious livelihood, by enacting the humble part of nurse to English invalids, who sought, in the genial clime of Italy, to recruit their failing systems.

' It was in this capacity that she attended the dying bed of the captain's lady, and from the delirious ravings of madness that she gleaned the sad history of the tragical end of her quondam paramour. After her engagement had thus expired, she was soon reduced to still greater distress, and as a desperate and last resource for relief, waylaid, as we have seen, the unhappy captain. She remained with him till the hour of his death, and then I believe came to England with the money he left her.

" Said I not so ;" shouted Hunks, who had been for some time impatient to interrupt the speaker, " This Italian Witch was no other than our Bess of Bedlam, that was convicted of practising the Black Art, and bewitching all the spinsters in the country side."—

" What was her fate?" enquired the stranger.

" She was declared guilty of sorcery, as I told you, and sentenced to be burnt on the market-hill ; but the mob taking the law into their own hands, seized upon the old woman, hurried her away to the ducking-stool, and soused her so frequently, that when taken out of the chair to be led away to the pile of faggots on which she was to be burnt, she was found to be quite dead ; and as there would be no fun in burning a dead witch, the mob kindly allowed the corpse to be carried away to the bone house, and afterwards to be buried."

"Very kind indeed." said the stranger.

"Why yes;—it was considerate, I must say,—I was myself principally instrumental in effecting that diversion in the old lady's favour."

"Very humane indeed, Mr. Cobbler!—but how know you that she was indentical with the unfortunate Mirabel?"

"She was ever chaunting the verses you have this evening quoted; and, moreover, all her ravings were about the Traffords. She quite haunted poor Harry Fuddle, and was ever harrassing him with her ill-omened prognostications touching the fortunes of his house."

Here another pause in the conversation ensued, during which all the guests, except the trio first introduced and the tale-telling traveller, departed, for it was now one o'clock. The cobbler, the breeches-maker, and the flax-dresser, however, upon whom an extraordinary libation of good liquor had only had the effect of rendering them more sociable, and altogether oblivious of their better halves, drew their seats up in a small circle round the fire, and recharged their pipes and glasses, as if determined to make a night of it. The chat was some time general, but the all absorbing subject of the evening was soon again brought upon the tapis, when the stranger resumed his narrative.

"Why, as to his death, master cobbler," said he, in reply to an enquiry of that worthy mechanic, "I can give you the particulars in few words. I told you before that the captain was constant in his attendance at a certain gaming-house. Now you will not wonder when I inform you that my "*ancien camarade*," Black Harry, sometimes soldier, sometimes bandit, was himself always

a gamester, and consequently passed through various and rapid changes of fortune,—to day a lord,—to morrow a beggar. In pursuit of this his most honourable profession, he visited Rome, and during his residence there frequented every gaming-house within the confines of the eternal city. In so doing he one night recognised his old master and liberal subsidizer, Trafford; the sight of whom made his heart leap with joy;—it was like springing a new mine, which he might indeed call all his own, and which he at once determined should never more escape him."

"The unhappy victim of accidental parricide, blighted love, ill-governed passion, and ruffianly extortion, sat absorbed in the game in which he was engaged, with all his soul centred on the throw of the fatal die, and utterly unconscious of the evil eye that was watching his every movement with the savage maliciousness of a tiger ready to pounce upon its passive prey the moment it moves. The throw was in Trafford's favour, and his pile of gold was now doubled. The gratification of success, more than the love of pelf, had mantled his sallow visage with a fleeting smile, when his eye chanced to encounter the fierce glance that was so earnestly fixed upon him. As if fascinated by the sight of a basilisk, he remained for some seconds speechless and motionless, glaring steadily in the direction of the horrible spectre that had paralysed him, until with a sudden spring he rose and fled, leaving his large bank of money to the grasping knaves that greedily pounced upon it the moment his back was turned. This he did with such precipitation as actually to baffle the instant pursuit of his enemy, and to reach his apartments unmolested."

"Oh, what a night to the unhappy man! How incessantly did he pace his solitary chamber, for sleep—"He had murdered sleep."

"To be found at last by the demon that for so many years had haunted his sleeping and waking dreams;—and the terror of whose hated presence had hurried his beloved wife to a premature grave! All the horrors of discovery and infamy again rose before his mind;—every step in the street,—every sound in the house, alarmed him. They were coming to drag him to the scaffold!"

"Morn came at last, and while seated before the untasted meal, a note was put into his hand:—aye, 'twas from him!—from whom else could it be? The blood-hound, although he had lost sight, had not lost the track, of his victim, and if he did not pounce instantly upon him, it was because he knew him wholely in his power. "He was poor."—So said his letter,—what gambler is not so? "He wondered that his ancient friend and foster-brother should avoid him. He did not wish him any evil—oh, no, no,—but if, as a favour, he could accommodate him with a cool hundred or two,—why, he should feel much obliged!"

"Such was the tenor of the gracious epistle that now greeted the eyes of the wretched captain. He was in the toils,—He must submit for a time; but his determination was at once taken to break through them,—at once and for ever,—by fair means or by foul. In the mean time he could only answer the hypocritical note in a similar strain."

"He was sorry to hear his old friend was so indifferently favoured by fortune,—should be happy to assist him to the utmost of his power, and would not fail to meet him at the time and place appointed."

"This reply being dispatched, Trafford breathed again; —his resolution was formed, and he was consequently in comparative peace, knowing that his troubles would shortly be at an end."

"Ashton had named a certain obscure tavern as the place of rendezvous; and thither, at the appointed hour, Trafford repaired, armed, though covertly, to the very teeth. Ashton was awaiting his arrival in a small back room, and on his entrance rose to greet his old master with the vulgar frankness peculiar to his rank and character, but the captain, without noticing his salutation, secured the door behind him, and advancing slowly up to his tormentor, looked him steadily in the face, and in a quiet yet decisive tone, said to him.

"Gilbert Ashton, you once did me an important service, and I paid you the price you stipulated for. Since that time you have availed yourself of the power your knowledge of my secret has given you over me, to extort large sums from my fears."

"Why, your life and fortune were wholely—"

"Hear me out, Ashton. Through dread of your treachery and the threats you have held out, though you knew me innocent, I have led a life of torturing anxiety, worse than to have suffered a thousand deaths. For some years I have escaped your persecution by a change of residence, and during that time have enjoyed comparative peace,—or at least such peace as so unfortunate a being as I can hope to find on this side the grave. But you have discovered my retreat, and I have every reason to fear a repetition of your former proceedings to the destruction alike of my fortune and peace of mind. I now require an explicit declaration of your views and intentions on this matter."

"Why, captain, to tell you the truth, it has happened to me according to the proverb, "Give a dog a bad name, and hang him." Now, for your sake, I took a bad name, and from that day forth I have daily grown worse and poorer, despite of all that you have advanced to me, all I have either earned or—why should I mince the word,—stolen, since I left Boston; I therefore leave you to judge whether I can spare you an iota of the advantage I have over you. However I will not be hard upon you, and am willing to listen to a reasonable proposal from you."

"I will give nothing," coolly replied Trafford, "but on a full and fair understanding that you never trouble me more."

"And why should I consent to such conditions?" said Ashton.

"Because you have no choice but that or this:" exclaimed Trafford, drawing a pistol from his breast. He then added. "We are here alone, Ashton;—I have secured the door, and only one of us shall ever repass it alive. Nay," He continued, "fear not that that I will murder you. Take one of these pistols,—retire to what distance you please, and fire the instant that clock begins to strike—I see it now wants only a minute to nine."

"There is no necessity for this," said Ashton, grasping convulsively the proffered weapon. "Give me a good round sum to start me fairly in the world again, and I will leave you unmolested to your fate."

"I will not trust you." said the now greatly excited Trafford.

"Then take the fate you have tempted," said Ashton, instantly shooting the unfortunate man in the breast.

"The report of the pistol alarmed the other inmates of the tavern, who instantly forced the door, and rnshed into the room. The wounded man was found with a pistol still clenched firmly in his hand, which consequently gave a specious colouring to the assertion of the assassin, that he had fallen in fair fight in an affair of honour; and the low character of the house, in which Ashton was well known, will at once account for the fact that he was allowed to escape before the officers of justice had cognizance of the matter.

'He was at first doubtful whither to direct his steps, but as if rendered desperate by this tragical termination of his golden dreams, he ran with all speed to the residence of his victim, and hurriedly informed the servants what had befallen Trafford. These, as he had expected, at once proceeded in mass to the relief of their wounded master, leaving the house entirely unguarded. This was as he desired, and in a few minutes he had traversed every chamber of the deserted dwelling, and in his passage had appropriated every valuable and portable article he could find, together with a casket of money, jewels, and papers. With these he decamped before the mournful train of attendants reappeared with their dying master, who, though he was expected momentarily to breathe his last, had insisted on being removed to his own residence.

'Thus closed the mortal career of Francis Trafford, after having dictated a short will to his confessor, bequeathing sundry sums of money to his servants, and all his goods and furniture at Rome to Mirabel, who received his last breath, closed his eyes, and committed his body to the tomb, out of the proceeds of what he had left her.'

These were the last words which Aristobulus Hunks remembered to have heard of this strange narrative, when he awoke from the nap into which he had fallen, as he sat before the dying embers of the fire. On looking round him, he saw Short lying along the floor, as he had fallen from his seat,—Mudge snoring with his head upon the table, and even the landlord himself enjoying a comfortable snooze upon the settle. His first movement was to arouse Sackbutt, who, on being touched, instantly jumped up, and cried "Coming, coming, Sir;" but on rubbing his eyes, and recalling the events of the previous evening, he enquired what had become of the stranger guest, for his chair was now vacant. All the sleepers were by this time awake, and all declared themselves equally unable to account for the disappearance of their interesting boon companion. Mine host now opened the shutters and admitted the light of day, and a search was made for the missing guest. He was not in the house, his horse was gone from the stable, and in short he was never seen more. None knew whence he came,—none knew whither he had gone,—nor could any one ever divine why he did either.—Hunks maintained to the day of his death, that the story-teller of that night was nothing but a spectre; and Short supported the same opinion; but Mudge, who it seems had minutely examined his outward man, stoutly insisted that he was a being of flesh and blood, for never did ghost wear such genuine good cordovan gloves, and such fine buck-skin breeches, as those that covered the portly person of the Tale-teller.

CHAPTER VI.

"A change came o'er the spirit of my dream." BYRON.

The lapse of seven years, at the expiration of which we resume the thread of our narrative, had wrought its usual changes in Boston and the denizens thereof;—some of the great men of the town had passed down the stream of time, and were forgotten;—some had ceased to shine as the stars of the local firmament;—whilst others formerly of less note, had become the primary constellations of their sphere, and already evinced strong tokens of forgetfulness of the lowliness from which they sprung.

Nor had the worthy tradesmen, whom we before introduced to our readers, failed to experience their share of the mutations which revolving years had brought about. Master Robert Short, the flax-dresser, had fallen beneath the stroke of the general leveller, and his place consequently knew him no more. Geoffery Mudge, now Mr. Alderman Mudge, who had in the interval thriven apace, had become one of the magistrates of the town, and already aspired to the civic chair. Sundry bequests and fortunate speculations had thus raised the good man from a petty manufacturer, to a wealthy and respectable general

dealer; and he now strutted up and down his enlarged premises, chinking the loose guineas in his breeches' pockets, scarcely deigning to recognize his old acquaintances. So far indeed had his pride carried him in this respect, that the bold familiarities of his ancient boon companion, Hunks, who did not sufficiently appreciate the budding honours of his flourishing neighbour, had given mortal offence, and he had therefore dismissed the cobbler from his small tenement under the shop window, as the only sure means of being entirely freed from his "low and vulgar conversation," as he now discovered it to be.

As for Master Aristobulus, though driven from one stall he soon found another, in which he whistled as loudly and sung as merrily as before. The only change observable in him, was, firstly a considerable enlargement of that part of his person which was generally screened by a leathern apron, and secondly that the native hue of his proboscis had turned from a bright red to a deep purple, a mutation effected by the frequent immersion of its extremity in a pottle-pot. His new residence was at the foot of the bridge, and happily for his convivial propensities, stood next door to the Antiquarian Coffee-house, a small tavern kept by no less a person than the renowned Charles Little, who supposed himself to have monopolized all the learning of the age, with the exception of the small portion which he allowed his friend and patron, Dr. Stukeley, to possess.

This literary quack, who prided himself on the possession of a strange medley of old coins and such other nicknackeries, as generally cumber the museums of ignorant antiquaries, when not engaged in sounding the depth

of his own casks, or in communicating of their contents to his customers, spent most of his time in lounging against the cobbler's bulk, which happily stood in a position that enabled him to observe whatever crossed the bridge, and to communicate his remarks thereupon to his merry neighbour. Thus was he employed on the day from which we recommence our tale; and after roughly handling the characters of several of the most respectable and wealthy burghers, had entered, with all the dogmatism of the most profound nescience, into an interesting discussion upon the date of an old brass farthing, which had been palmed upon him by a travelling tinker for a Roman coin, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Hillo! Hunks, what have we here?" as a gentleman in a military undress and cloak, well mounted, and followed by two servants with cockades, made his appearance at the opposite side of the bridge.

The cobbler instantly popped his head out of his stall, and peered eagerly through his spectacles at the imposing apparition.

"The stranger is a gentleman," said Hunks, "for both he and his servant are mounted on splendid nags."

"Your humble servant." continued the astonished cobbler, doffing the greasy cap that covered his bald pate, and scraping his short leg upon the pavement in the most approved style of bowing, for the gallant horseman in passing had certainly waved his hand and nodded in the direction of the queer pair.

The curiosity of Little was so much excited by this incident, that he stepped forth into the road, as the last servant, who led a sumpter horse laden with his master's luggage, was passing, and said to him,

"Who may your master be, my man?"

"Your man!—you be ——." and putting spurs to his spirited horse, our antiquarian host had enough to do to escape being ridden down, and returned to his companion sorely bespattered, growling,

"We need no other proof that the master is a great man when we find his menial so insolent."

"But who can he be" said Hunks, "for he certainly nodded to me, though I have no recollection of having ever seen him before. Here, Kitty, you slut," he added, addressing his daughter, whose pretty face was seen peeping out of a small window over the stall, and for whom in truth the military stranger's smile and nod were intended, "Run round the corner, and see where those horsemen are gone to."

"Yes, father,—yes," said the alert damsel, not at all displeased with her commission, for she had made no mistake as to the destination of the elegant stranger's salute, and therefore tripped away lightly to execute her father's order. Half an hour had elapsed before the maiden's return, and in the interval, Little had fetched out a tankard of his best, for the comfortable discussion of which the cobbler and he had seated themselves on the settle before the Coffee-house. Numerous were the surmises raised and rejected, touching the appearance of the unknown, which led to a general discourse upon the chances of war and peace, and the probability of a rumoured attempt by the Pretender, until the animated speakers worked themselves into the idea that the very stranger himself might be no other than the illustrious exile, travelling incog., or at least that he was some distinguished officer from the Court of St. Germain's, sent

over to feel the pulse of the people, and to prepare the field for future action.

"But here comes Kitty to solve the mystery. Well, girl, what have you learnt?"

"Why, father, according to your direction I followed the stranger until he alighted at the vicarage; upon seeing which I made bold to step into the kitchen, and ask Susan Cook all about him. From her I have learnt that they have expected a visitor for some days, who—so Miss Biddy told her maid,—holds some high office at Court, and is a very brave soldier, having killed I know not how many Frenchmen in the late war in Germany."

"But what is his name? and why does he visit Boston?"

"I have quite forgotten his name; but as to his coming here—why you must know, that he once lived in Boston, and some years ago left the town a poor beggar-boy, without a coat to his back, or a shoe to his foot; but being honest, brave, and fortunate, he has thriven amazingly in the interval. And I am sure he richly deserves all he has got, for he is as handsome as he is great and good."

"Plague upon the girls!—all they think about is a man's features. If he be but good looking, he is sure to be honest, in their opinion. But here comes old Sixanate's clerk—he's sure to know the news if any one does."

"Strange affair this," said the scrivener, who now came up, and as a matter of course stopped to have his chat and glass of raw Hollands with Master Little, "very extraordinary indeed!"

"What do you refer to, Master Scrawlum?" interjected the inquisitive Hunks.

"What, have you not heard of the wonderful change that has been so suddenly brought about in the fortunes of Sir Henry Trafford, formerly our old friend Harry Fuddle? You must at any rate have seen him ride by just now."

"Was that Sir Harry Trafford, say you?—Well, I am happy to see him return to his native town in such style, and with a disposition not to be ashamed of old friends, for he favoured me with a bow in passing, though I must confess I had entirely forgotten him. Aye, aye, —many's the sly trick, the mad rogue has played me. Lets hope his manners, as well as his fortunes, have mended in the interval."

"It seems," resumed the lawyer's clerk, "that Jerry Holdfast did not do exactly the genteel thing by his young client, when he was formerly concerned for him, and the consequence is that the gallant knight has transferred his business to my master; and it was from a conversation between Mr. Rigby and Old Sixanate, which took place in our office, that I gleaned the particulars. From what I overheard, it appears that when he left Boston, it was with a view to proceed forthwith to India in a civil capacity, that on reaching town he was introduced to Sir William Irby, then vice-chamberlain to the Princess Augusta of Wales, who having been formerly acquainted with his father, and being remotely connected with his family, took so lively an interest in the forlorn young man, that he promised to take care of his future fortunes, if he would give up his Indian appointment, and accept a subordinate situation about the Court, into which he would induct him. This offer Trafford at once accepted, and being both a gentleman and a scholar, he

so conducted himself in his office, as to find speedy promotion, until his zeal and ability attracted the favourable notice of the Prince of Wales, and through him of the king himself. The first fruits of his favour were a captain's commission in the Prince's own regiment of Hussars, and the lucrative and honourable post of page in waiting to his Majesty. Last year he joined his regiment under the Earl of Stair, and was present at the battle fought in June last, near Dettingen. The king himself was present in that action, and displayed great personal courage, exposing himself to a severe fire of cannon as well as of musquetry, and encouraging the troops by his presence and example."

"Aye, aye,—there's no want of courage or spirit in the Hanoverian family, let the Jacobins say what they will." remarked Master Little.

"Well, you must know" resumed Scrawlum, "that just when the French began to give way, an unlucky baggage train, which had been delayed by the bad roads, and had partly wandered from the route assigned it, made its appearance on the brow of a distant hill, on the right flank of the enemy, and in a direction which a party of the enemy's horse seemed likely to take in their retreat. Now it was very desirable that this train should not be plundered, as it contained many valuables, the private property of the king, and a troop of light horse was accordingly dispatched to cover its approach. Good fortune threw this chance in the way of our young friend,—he and his troop were the first at hand, and on receiving the order, went off with the speed of the wind, nor had they a moment to spare, for a party of the French light horse had been dispatched at the same mo-

ment to cut off the train. Johnny *Crapaud* rode *ventre à terre*, but he was not able to gain his point, for Trafford and his troop had just time to form themselves on one side of the waggons before the French party came up, who finding themselves baffled of the promised plunder, vented a few *sacres*, and after firing their pistols galloped off by the way they came.

"Ah, ah, Master Frog did not like the looks of the English bull-dogs." said Hunks, with a loud giffaugh.

"An English travelling carriage," resumed Scrawlum, "containing a gentleman and his daughter, had joined this train in the course of the day, for the sake of the escort, being desirous to reach the protection of the English camp, but at the time of the abovementioned skirmish it was some distance behind, having been detained by a slight accident on the road a few minutes before; and it chanced to reach the brow of the hill, which had sheltered it from previous observation, just as the Frenchmen rode off. Four of the enemy's troopers perceived the isolated situation of the carriage, and eager to indemnify themselves for the disappointment they had just sustained, detached themselves from their comrades, and riding direct towards the unprotected travellers, instantly shot the postillion, and after discharging another pistol into the carriage, proceeded to cut open the portmanteau and valises, and to appropriate their contents. The cries of the lady first attracted the observation of Trafford to this affair, who instantly perceiving how the matter stood, ordered his party to proceed with the train towards the camp, and putting spurs to his horse flew to the relief of his fair country-woman. What followed was the work of a few seconds;—the first fellow he encountered he shot

dead on the spot,—the second he disabled by throwing the pistol with all his force in his face,—the third he struck at with his sabre until he cried for quarter,—and the fourth fled for his life, Trafford then, without dismounting, seized the rein of one of the leading horses, and exciting them into a gallop, thus brought his prize right into the camp."

"This feat was luckily witnessed by the king himself, who, with Lord Stair and several other officers, was standing on a rising ground which commanded the field, and was observing from thence the retreat of the discomfited enemy. He immediately sent for the officer who had commanded the rescue, and, after highly commending his conduct, knighted him on the spot."

"The act of a king, performed in a princely style!" ejaculated Little.

"But the cream of the jest remains to be told," continued the narrator. "The rescued damsel, who alone survived, for her father was killed in the encounter, proved to be no other than the identical Miss Walton, in whose behalf the lawsuit was commenced, which in its termination stripped Trafford of the estates which he inherited in right of his mother; and she, as in duty bound, feels so grateful for the services of her gallant deliverer, that she proposes to return him all that she formerly took from him, with the slight additional favour of throwing herself into the bargain."

"That is as it should be," said the cobbler, rubbing his hands with glee. "It is strange to see how things come about. But, by the bye, this account tallies with the prophesy, of that mad woman, Madeline."

"Yes," continued the lawyer's clerk, "I have heard as much before; but there is something still more mysterious in the recovery of certain deeds, the want of which has enabled old Graball to retain unjust possession of the large Bayfield property so long, to the prejudice of the rightful owner, Trafford. All that, however, will now be put to rights, for we are laying matters in train in our office, that will, I fancy, astonish some of the sly rogues that have been feathering their own nests at the expense of their neighbours."

"But what was the mystery you were speaking of?" enquired Hunks.

"I heard it but imperfectly," resumed Scrawlum, "but from what I gleaned, it would appear, that one of the fellows, that were wounded by Trafford whilst plundering the carriage, having been brought into the English camp, when at the point of death begged to see the gentleman by whom he had been shot. Trafford accordingly visited the dying man, who made some disclosures, which led to the recovery of the papers in question. But the particulars, I was not able to hear,—something was said, implying that the man was not a Frenchman, but a renegade Englishman, although taken fighting for the French, and in the uniform of that nation. And if I understood rightly, the fellow had formerly been servant to the late Trafford, and had appropriated the missing documents at the time of the old 'squire's death, in the hope of turning them to profit at some future day. At any rate the deeds are now safely deposited in our office, and will be forth-coming to good purpose."

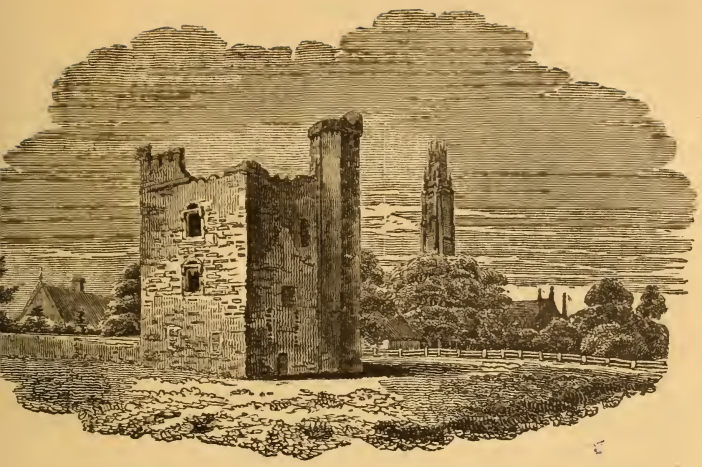
Some two months after the above conversation, a general jubilee was held by all the tenants of the exten-

sive Trafford and Walton properties, now again happily united by the intermarriage of the only surviving heirs of the two families.

Great was the assembly of the gentry of Boston and its neigbourhood to welcome the gallant bridegroom and blooming bride, when they arrived to take formal possession of their estates; upon which occasion Sir Henry went through the ancient ceremony of turning a turf with his own hands, in proof of his right to the soil. Nor were the populace of Boston forgotten by their fortunate fellow townsman, for noble joints of roast and boiled, with copious supplies of the nut-brown beverage, were liberally dispensed to all comers at several of the taverns by his orders. So that Master Aristobulus Hunks had an opportunity, of which he did not fail to avail himself, of getting happy and glorious whilst quaffing bumpers to the health of Sir Harry and his bride.

Whether this happy termination of the family feud has laid the troubled "Spirit of the Lady in White," we know not,—but if not we consider her more unreasonable than ghosts in general.

END OF THE OLD TAVERN.



THE ABDUCTION;

A LEGEND OF HUSSEY TOWER.

CHAPTER I.

"As full of peril and adventurous spirit
"As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud
"On the uncertain footing of a spear."

SHAKESPEARE.

MANY circumstances tend to prove that South-End, as the more southern part of Boston is now called, was in ancient times a very populous and important quarter of the town. A bridge, known as St. John's bridge, crossed the Witham, from the corner of St. John's Row to the bottom of White-Horse Lane in High-Street; just below which was the Steel-Yard, or Custom House; and very near the eastern extremity stood the old Parish

church of St. John, and Hussey Tower. In South-End also were, the Chantry, the Mart Close, the Grammar School, and several Religious Houses, besides many of the residences of the principal inhabitants.

In the latter part of the reign of the gay and dissolute Edward the Fourth of England, at which period the events recorded in the following legend took place, Sir William Hussey,[a] then Attorney General, occasionally visited his family mansion at Boston, of which the present ruinous tower formed a small but conspicuous part, and where his wife and children generally resided, although the duties of his office compelled him to spend most of his time in town.

In addition to the extensive buildings and offices requisite for the comfort and accommodation of a wealthy and distinguished family, the Tower was surrounded by an extensive garden, or pleasance, as it was then called, the walls of which were skirted by a grove of lofty trees, towards the north as far as the Grey Friary, and towards the south as far as the Austin Friary. The last named monastic establishment stood partly on the new Burying Ground, and partly on the adjoining field, and was also embosomed in trees.

The constant absence of Sir William Hussey from home, his immediate prospect of a seat upon the bench, together with the rising fortunes of his family, as evinced by the recent marriage of his eldest daughter with an earl, had induced the politic lawyer to commence an establishment in London, which he had recently done on a liberal scale. Lady Hussey had consequently been

a The father of Sir John, afterwards Lord Hussey, who was executed for High Treason in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

summoned to Town to preside over and direct the new household; and had thought it most advisable to leave the younger members of her family at Boston, until the new establishment was fully formed, and the domestic arrangements completed. Her second daughter, Mary, though only between sixteen and seventeen years of age, thus found herself the uncontrolled mistress, both of her own actions, and of all the dependants of the Tower; aided however by the guidance and assistance of a trustworthy steward, or seneschal, who was also left in full commission over every thing save the movements of the young lady herself.

Now, in the times of which we write, the coast of Lincolnshire was infested with gangs of free-booters,—half-smuggers, half pirates,—who, whenever they landed for the ostensible purpose of contraband traffic, always availed themselves of any opportunity that offered of plundering the unprotected inhabitants, and not unfrequently of carrying off the unfortunate people themselves. Repeated complaints of these depredations at length induced the government to appoint a small sloop of war to cruise upon the station, under the command of a dashing young dare-devil, commonly called "Captain Wildfire," under which *sobriquet* his real name of Bertie was almost lost sight of.

This gentleman, on his first arrival on the station, was introduced to Sir William Hussey and most of the respectable inhabitants of the town; but his wild and irregular habits, when occasionally ashore, gave great offence to the more sober denizens, and he therefore soon found himself excluded from the pale of civilized society. His general reckless bearing, together with sundry desperate

skirmishes he had with the pirates, in which he had displayed great personal courage, early acquired for him the name of terror above mentioned, and rendered him an object of dread to prudent mothers, who had beautiful daughters in their teens. Yet such was the perversity of the young ladies of Boston at that remote period, that the more their mammas and papas warned them against this terrible sea-monster, the more desirous did they seem to fall into his clutches, for his reputation for daring and gallantry, his unblushing effrontery, and handsome face and person, together with the currency of sundry mysterious rumours of his high rank and powerful interest at Court, rendered him altogether an object so fascinating, that all the young girls in the town, both gentle and simple, were setting their caps at him. Thrice only had captain Bertie visited Hussey Tower, and on the two last occasions he had been admitted only to an interview with the stately lady Hussey herself, all the other members of the family being carefully kept out of sight; and the old lady with all the dignified hauteur, which elderly matrons know so well how to assume towards ineligible young men, fairly warned the intruder off. His cold reception, however, by *Madame la Mère* by no means induced our hero to give up the object which had procured her the honour of his visit, for he felt his pride piqued, and his reputation as a daring gallant at stake by the rebuff he had experienced, and he resolved therefore to leave no means unturned of making love to the daughter, if it were only out of spite to the mother.

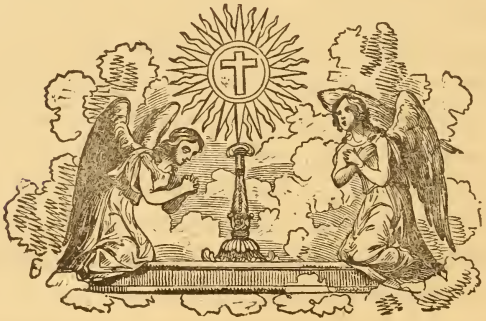
In the prosecution of this hopeful scheme, he had a powerful auxiliary in a young officer of his own ship, whose propensity to mischief made him a worthy follower

of such a commander.—By the instrumentality of this young gentleman, the lady's maid was soon won over, at the expense of sundry honied words and golden pieces.—Through her the conspirators became acquainted with all the movements of her young mistress; a knowledge, which on the departure of lady Hussey to London, they so improved, as by frequently waylaying her in her walks, gradually to make her acquaintance, so that their meetings, which at first were ostensibly accidental, soon became regular and appointed.

In the outset Bertie had contemplated any thing but an honourable termination to his suit, but the steady virtue, unaffected modesty, and confiding innocence of the beautiful young creature he had thus become familiar with, wrought an entire change in his views and sentiments with regard to her, and indeed in his whole character, for he now quite idolized the fair being whom he had originally approached with such dishonourable intentions.

Mary Hussey, who had thus made a convert of our hair-brained salt-water captain, was a young lady of a somewhat serious turn, having been for several years a boarder in the Benedictine Nunnery at Stainfield, from which place she had been recalled in the previous spring on the marriage of her sister, Elizabeth, with Richard Grey, Earl of Kent; and she still retained so many of her conventual ideas as to be very zealous in the performance of all the ceremonial observances required of the devout members of the Romish Church. Such an education, and such a temperament, rendered Mary Hussey peculiary susceptible of superstitious impressions, which her confessor, one of the Austin Friars from the neighbouring monastery, was careful to manage

so as to enthrall her gentle spirit in all the trammels of sophistry and priestcraft, and thereby to hold her in a sort of spiritual slavery, which the ancient lecher had long plotted to convert into an animal as well as mental prostration of his fair confiding penitent. The evil machinations of the monk had been much disturbed of late by the assiduities of captain Bertie and his emissary, but the duties of his command compelling the sailor to go to sea for a short time, the confessor resolved to avail himself of his absence to effect his nefarious purpose either by fair or by foul means, not doubting but the shelter of the church, and his monastic character, would protect him from the just reward of his crime, if his sophistry were not able to reconcile his victim to her fall; of which he did not altogether despair.



CHAPTER II.

" He must be told o't, and he shall : the office
" Becomes a woman best ; I'll tak't upon me :
" If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister."

SHAKESPEARE.

" Well, my pretty Alice, how fares your beautiful lady, Mistress Mary? She promised to visit my poor cell yester-eve, but I was doomed to be disappointed. I hope no evil has befallen the sweet lady."

" Good lack, no, father Adam ;—my young mistress was detained at the Tower to receive the Earl of Kent, and his lady, who are just returned from foreign parts. The countess, who you know is my young lady's sister, gives strange accounts of the wonderful sights they have seen beyond the seas :—How they have been to Rome, and have kissed his holiness, the pope's toe ;—and how he has granted them pardons for all the sins they shall ever commit, as well as for those they have already committed. How charming, father, it must be to possess such an indulgence ;—one could sin then with such a clear conscience !"

" I will explain that doctrine to you at a future time." said the priest.

" Her ladyship's page," continued the talkative damsel, " gave me a long account of their adventures last

evening;—a handsome youth is her ladyship's page, I assure you, father Adam, and the countess Elizabeth herself is a sweet lady and a fair. In good sooth, we are all delighted that the goodly company has arrived; for the followers of the earl are merry and frolicsome fellows, who make us so gay and happy, that the old hall and tower are already quite different places. Old Peter, the steward, is the only person displeased at the change, for my lord's attendants only laugh at the old churl when he commences one of his long harangues about temperance and good order."

"I fear me, Alice, these followers of the earl are but wild and ungodly men; and I warn you, as your ghostly adviser, to beware such roving boys, whose greatest delight is to deceive giddy maidens."

"Giddy maidens, indeed!—marry, come up, father Adam!—Methinks I, at least, needed not your reverence's caution. No, indeed!—I am my lady's own maid, indeed!—and though I may condescend to talk and laugh with pages and men-in-arms, I would have you to know, father Adam, that none below a 'squire's degree would presume to salute me. Wild boys, too, indeed!—I don't know truly whether poor maidens should be more on their guard against such, or against the sly, subtle, and insinuating oratory of the whining shaveling."

The friar, knowing that he had forfeited all right to lecture Alice on this subject, turned the conversation, and said, "Well, but my dear girl, what has all this to do with your message to me?—am I to expect the young lady this evening or not?"

"Yes, she will come, but contrary to my wish and advice, for I like not these long and frequent confessions. I cannot but suspect some mischief in agitation under all these mysterious visitations to St. Augustine's Chapel. Father Adam, you are well aware that I know you thoroughly, and believe you capable of any villany; I therefore warn you to beware how you tamper with the peace and honour of my noble young lady, for there is one that watches over her, that is both able and willing to protect and avenge her."

"Who may that be, Alice?—and what could make you fancy any evil as likely to befall the young lady by her frequent attendance upon the holy ordinance of confession?"

"As to whom I allude to,—that is a secret which is safer in my custody, though a woman's, than it would be in that of the holy father confessor, Friar Adam;—And for the why I suspect?—If you have forgotten the elm-grove by the fish-pond, I have not."

"Why, really, Alice, you look too seriously upon that innocent frolic, which was only intended to try how good and virtuous a maiden you were."

"Aye, aye, father Adam; and you found me a better and more virtuous maiden, than you either expected, or desired; or the fate of poor Bridget Welburn would have been mine,—a white sheet and a bare-foot penance at high mass, exposed to the scorn and sarcasm of all the country-side."

"These are matters, Alice, long passed and repented of, and should not be raked up anew. Adieu, my dear girl, give my blessing to your young mistress, and tell her I shall expect her at eventide."

CHAPTER III.

" Thus with his stealthy pace,
" With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
" Moves like a ghost." MACBETH.

The Austin Friary consisted of a considerable mass of buildings, erected rather with a view to the comfort and security of the inmates than to external display and effect. The delicate tracery and high finish of the porch, chapel, and refectory, however, proved that the architect had not made the fabric so plain from a deficiency of skill, but from design, for wherever he was allowed to exert his taste and genius the effect produced was at once magnificent and beautiful. This was particularly evinced in the chapel, which was exquisitely rich and chaste both in design and execution.

This monastery, though but of a secondary order, was liberally endowed; and its large and well-furnished offices were filled with lay-brothers, glad to partake of the spoils of the monks, whose meals savoured little of the temperance and simplicity prescribed by the rules of their order. It was indeed a place every way calculated for holy seclusion, wherein a mind, weaned from worldly pleasure, might devote its declining years to peace and

godliness; and in which, the spirit broken by misfortune, the victim of disappointed love, or of blighted ambition, might learn to forget its sorrows by fixing its hopes upon heaven. Alas! that such should have been only the nursery of ignorance, sloth, passion, and intemperance! The outward semblance looked fair to the world, but within guilt and vice triumphed.

The sun had just sunk in calm beauty below the western horizon, when the chimes of the monastery summoned the monks to their evening devotions, and they were seen in their black scapularies, gliding slowly through the dark green trees towards the chapel. The dark vestments and silent march of the friars, the dim twilight, together with the deep toll of the bell, as it floated on the evening breeze, threw a solemnity over the whole scene, which gave to the devotees the air of spirits of another world.

The chaunt of the monks was still echoing through the vaulted buildings and the adjoining groves, when a young lady, closely veiled, tripped quickly and fearfully along a foot-path towards St. Augustine's chapel. Every few steps she cast around her a terrified glance;—nor did her alarm appear groundless, for though unseen by her, the dark countenance of a man occasionally peered over the adjoining underwood, or from behind a neighbouring tree. This person, whoever he might be, though sometimes in advance of the object he was watching, did not attempt to arrest her course; but the rustling of the foliage, which attended his rapid change of place, increased her terrors so much, that she ran, or rather flew, towards the chapel, and tapping at a postern, was immediately admitted.

"I am happy to find, my dear young lady, that you are diligent to perform the duty I enjoined. May the Blessed Virgin smile upon you, for you are the delight of her aged servant's heart." So said the friar that awaited the lady's arrival in the chapel.

"Ah, well-a-day, good father Adam;—I fear I shall not dare to persevere in attendance at eventide, for, good lack!—methought that robbertsmen and ravishers were ever on my track, for the bushes rustled on all sides of me."

"'Twas nothing but the breeze, my sweet lady; or the birds, which your foot-fall startled from their nests: but if it alarms you to traverse the grove after sun-set, I must steal from my devotions some earlier part of the day."

"Thanks, good father;—thanks, good father;—I am but a poor weak girl, and indeed I almost fainted before I reached the wicket."

"Compose yourself, my dear lady. I will give you a cordial, which will soothe and compose you, preparatory to confession. At which holy sacrament the mind should always be calm and collected; for, be it remembered, you confess to God and not to man, although, we, his unworthy servants, are the instruments he is pleased to employ."

The lady took the potion presented to her, and knelt for some time in silent prayer before a crucifix. She was extremely beautiful,—a *blonde* in complexion, with bright blue eyes, and a form of exquisite symmetry; her rich and clustering locks fell in charming disorder over her neck and shoulders, as her beaming eyes were raised in fervent devotion to the holy emblem. Not far re-

moved from her right, and somewhat in the rear, stood father Adam, a short portly personage, with a round rubicund face and small lascivious eyes twinkling from their deep and fat sockets, and gloating upon the fair maiden then kneeling before him, whose pure mind he had entangled in the sophistry of superstition, and by the trammels he had thus thrown around her understanding, hoped to win her to his own vile purposes.

The other monks had now retired to their dormitories, and the hoary sinner thereupon took the hand of his fair confiding penitent and led her to the confessionary, all his motions being observed by the same eye that had watched the lady through the grove, and which now glanced upon them from behind the pillars of the aisle; and when the friar took his seat and the lady knelt to confession, a dark figure suddenly flitted into a recess near them.

The whispered confession of the lady continued for some time to be partially heard in the solemn stillness, but at length it ceased.—Strange to say, she had fallen asleep in the place where she knelt!

The wily monk, who had foreseen the effect his draught would produce, remained quiet for a short time, until its torpid influence should have deadened all her faculties, he then peeped out upon his passive victim, as the tiger does upon the sleeping traveller, his eyes sparkling with savage delight. Then laying aside all at once his wonted slow pace and dignified demeanour, and wisping his robe up under his arm, he hobbled briskly through the cloisters, leaving the lady in her dormant position.

No sooner was he gone than the mysterious being before mentioned stepped from his concealmeut, and after surveying her for a moment in silent admiration, imprinted a kiss upon her forehead, and again retreated to his hiding place.

Father Adam presently returned, and with him came another monk, apparently an unwilling agent in the affair, and much displeased at being roused from his doze at so unseasonable an hour. The two fat old men immediately raised the sleeping beauty in their arms in no very graceful or gentle manner, and bore her away through the south transept into a passage bordering on the prior's garden, at the further extremity of which near the river bank, stood St. Austin's grot. In times of strict discipline this solitary cell had been occasionally used as a dungeon for severe penance in cases of heinous misdemeanour amongst the fraternity. Towards this grot, as to a place of seclusion wherein any villany might be perpetrated without fear of interruption, did the two friars bear their fair burden, and, depositing it upon the grass, proceeded to unlock the door. It was, however, long before they could find the right key from the rusty bunch, which the porter had brought,—for such was friar Adam's worthy confederate. At length their united efforts forced open the door, thereby disturbing sundry owls, bats, toads, and other vermin, that had long been the occupants of this damp and dismal den; but no sooner was the portal fairly opened than an invisible hand from behind, violently and irresistibly thrust the two old sinners within its confines, closed and locked the door, and left them to their devotions.

CHAPTER IV.

" Lost !—lost !
" Ah ! whither has she fled ?" OLD PLAY.

EARLY the next morning Hussey Tower was the scene of noisy preparation for a grand banquet and rejoicing, to which all the noble and distinguished of the town and neighbourhood had been invited, in honour of the visit of the noble Earl of Kent and his beautiful bride to the place of her nativity. In furtherance of this design workmen were employed in erecting temporary buildings both in the Tower Court and in the Mart Close, for the exhibition of feats of strength and skill, and for the accommodation of jugglers and mountebanks, who were always at hand to amuse the guests of the rich and noble after their early dinner. Sir William Hussey himself was also expected to arrive by high-noon, to take his place at the banquet board, and to preside over the sports. But this gay and cheerful bustle was quickly converted into dismay and consternation by the discovery of the absence of Mistress Mary Hussey. No one had seen her quit the Tower ;—her couch was undisturbed, and every thing tended to show that she had not spent

the night in her apartment. A general search was immediately instituted, but the missing damsel was no where to be found. Horsemen were dispatched far and wide, but they returned without bringing any tidings of the lost lady. She had parted with her sister, Elizabeth, early on the previous evening, and, alleging indisposition, had retired to her chamber. No one had seen her since. "But where is Alice?—perhaps she can give an account of her mistress."

Alice had also disappeared, nor did any one know when or how she had departed. It was soon whispered amongst the domestics, that the young lady had frequently visited the Austin Priory of late; and that Alice had been seen in conversation with Father Adam on the afternoon preceding their disappearance. As soon as these facts were reported to Sir William, he went directly to the Friary, where he found the venerable prior in great perplexity at the unusual absence of his porter and sacristan, the latter being the office filled by friar Adam: but of the lady and her maid none of the monks had heard or seen any thing. The mystery seemed to thicken around this strange affair; for although the search was resumed throughout the priory and its grounds,—although every office, every cell, every tomb and vault was strictly scrutinized;—neither monk nor lady was to be found. The neighbouring groves were traversed in all directions, but to no better purpose, for none of the searchers chanced to pass near St. Austin's grot; or they would inevitably have heard the moanings and mutual reproaches of the unhappy prisoners, who still remained there with a fair prospect of starvation before their eyes.

CHAPTER V.

"Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,
"When death's approach appears so terrible!

SHAKESPEARE.

Now it chanced that Sir William Hussey, and his son-in-law, the Earl of Kent, towards the close of the day, strolled down to the Scalpe, in hopes of meeting some of the parties that had been dispatched to the sea shore in quest of the missing fair-one; for the general impression was, that she had been carried off by a marauding party of smugglers or pirates, as no trace whatever of her flight could be discovered in any other direction. Disappointed in this expectation, the broken-hearted father was slowly retracing his steps along the bank, supported by the arm of the young earl, who was in vain endeavouring to comfort him, when their attention was arrested by certain strange noises, which proceeded from a clump of trees, in the midst of which stood St. Augustine's Grot. They approached to discover the cause, and were surprised at the wild and discordant sounds, that issued from the cell, in which they at once concluded that some unhappy lunatics were confined. Some chance words, however, induced them to listen, when they heard the following colloquy.

"Had I not lent myself to your treacherous schemes against confiding innocence, and thereby catered to your sensuality, I should not now be starving in a dungeon.—O Christ, forgive me!—Blessed Mary, plead for me!"

"You doting old fool!" was the reply, "all you ever lived for was to glut, guzzle, and doze in your arm chair, at the port. Pray, who has upheld you so long in your idle berth? Who has so often averted your expulsion from the sluggish office, you sottish drone?—Who has incessantly supplied your thirsty paunch with draughts of the best, unknown to our principal?"

"Cans't thou now supply my burning throat with a draught of water, Adam?—I will thank thee:—I will thank thee, Adam."

"Why, truly, Gilbert, thou speakest sooth, for, if we are not released this night, we are like to become food for the noxious reptiles that swarm around us."

"Oh! for a drop of water!" yelled the unhappy porter.

This brief calm was succeeded by another storm of the wildest curses and imprecations upon each other, in the midst of which Sir William and the Earl departed for the Priory; for they could not help connecting what they had heard with the mysterious disappearance of Mary Hussey.

"Whom have you immured in that solitary cell, father prior?" enquired Sir William. "And what crimes can have called for so severe a penance?"

The prior, who scarcely knew of the existence of the grot, was surprised at the enquiries. This led to an explanation, and several monks were sent to ascertain who the prisoners were. The wretched old men, who had

now been six and thirty hours without breaking their fast, were no sooner challenged by their brethren from without, than with one shrill cry, they called for food and drink. To the questions, "How came you here?—who locked you up?—the only reply was, "let us out;—food;—water,—water."

With the assistance of a smith, the door was forced open, and the miserable captives, squalid and emaciated, crawled out of their prison,—worn in mind and body with terror, remorse, and hunger. Unable to walk, they were borne on litters to the monastery, where Sir William and the prior, although eager to interrogate them, commiserated their wretched plight so much that they ordered them to be supplied with nourishing cordials, and after a thorough ablution to be put to bed.

The next morning the same party assembled in the prior's parlour, to hear the explanation the sacristan and the porter had to give of their extraordinary imprisonment, which it was expected would throw some light upon the disappearance of the lost lady. Gilbert, the porter, had nearly recovered from the effect of his fast and confinement, but the sacristan had been attacked during the night with rheumatic fever in conseqence of exposure to the damp of the cell, and was then raving mad. At one time he talked wildly about Mary Hussey, and his many crimes; at another, of the vermin and bats in his late prison; in which his excited imagination made him suppose himself to be still immured. His evidence consequently could not be taken, and that of the porter was confused and unintelligible.

The tale he told was, that the lady having fainted in the chapel, he and Adam attempted to carry her home

through the grove;—that as they passed St. Austin's grot, the lady was snatched from them by invisible hands, and they themselves were thrust with great violence into the cell.

"How came the lady to faint,—and why did you not call for proper assistance to convey her home?"

He could not for some time be induced to say more; but when the prior and Sir William threatened, that if he did not at once confess all he knew, he should be shut up for life in the dungeon, from which he had so recently escaped, the terrified old man, falling on his knees, proceeded to develop the infamous practices of the sacristan, his vile designs upon Mistress Mary Hussey, and the secret of the medicated draught, together with other similar plots, in which innocence and virtue had been sacrificed at the shrine of hypocrisy and lust. But nothing was elicited to throw light upon the retreat of the lost lady; for the old porter was utterly unable to account for the violence he and his brother in iniquity had suffered, and consequently to explain the disappearance of their gentle burden. Indeed the old man leant to the idea, that the devil himself, or some of his prime agents, had been employed on the occasion to punish the guilty, while some good angel flew away with the immaculate fair-one to heaven; and father Adam dying that same evening, still in a state of delirium, left the matter wrapt in all its original mystery.

CHAPTER VI.

" Come o'er the sea,
" Maiden ! with me.
" Let fate frown on, so we love and part not ;
" ' Tis life where thou art, 'tis death where thou art not."
MOORE.

When Mary Hussey first awoke to partial perception, the torpid effects of the potion which had been administered to her, had not entirely passed away, and her senses consequently received but a confused impression of objects around her; but as the mist which enveloped both her eyes and her understanding dispersed, she found herself reclining upon a small but splendid couch, in a narrow apartment, in which were assembled all the comforts and luxuries of life, as it were *in petto*. A silver lamp suspended from the low roof, threw a rich and glowing tint over the furniture and ornaments of the fairy retreat. " But, good heaven !—it is all in motion." shrieked the simple maiden. " Surely I am bewitched, and this is the cell of some sorcerer who is exercising his diabolical power over me."

Scarcely had she said this when a dark visage, encirled with black hair, was for a moment thrust in at a door, and again instantly withdrawn. The sight of that dreadful countenance, so savage, so oger-like, confirmed all her terrors, which the report of several cannons immediately over her head heightened almost to madness, and the poor girl hid her face in the pillow, and sobbed convulsively, until a familiar voice addressing her in friendly accents recalled her attention and confidence. It was that of her maid, Alice; who uttered an acclamation of joy at finding her fair mistress recovered from her long and death-like trance.

"Where am I?" was the first and earnest enquiry of the young lady.

"You are among friends, my dear madam," said Alice. "Don't be alarmed."

"Where is my sister?—and what has happened to me?" continued the still perplexed young lady.

Alice then detailed to her the incidents attending her visit to the chapel, the knavery and contrivances of the confessor; all which, it appeared, the subtle waiting maid had previously suspected, and communicated to our nautical hero, who, with the impassioned ardour of his character, immediately undertook to watch the motions of the treacherous monk, and to baffle his villany. This we have seen fully effected, and after shutting the shavelings in the cell, which was to have been the scene of their iniquity, he conveyed the insensible fair-one to a galley, which was in attendance upon the beach below. Thither had Alice also repaired, as she persuaded herself, to learn the result of his observation, but in truth to listen to the soft nonsense of the mischievous young reefer, Jack Bang.

It would appear that captain Bertie had not originally contemplated carrying off his fair mistress on this occasion, whatever he might have done on others, but the opportunity was so favourable, that he could not, nor indeed did he try to, resist the temptation. The entreaties of Alice, that the young lady should be taken back to the Tower, and committed to the care of the earl and countess, were consequently unheeded; and she herself, partly by persuasion, and partly by force, was induced to enter the boat, and take her seat by her mistress' side.

Once on board, the young lady was carefully deposited upon the captain's couch, and his state-cabin was entirely surrendered to her and her maid. The captain, on retiring, left strict orders with Alice to watch her mistress attentively, and to give him immediate notice of any change that might take place in her fair charge. The excitement attendant upon his recent adventure, and his extreme anxiety for the speedy recovery of the fair creature, now so entirely in his power, filled his breast with a tumult of passions, and gave to his demeanour the air of a mad-man; for, on quitting the cabin, he first paced the deck with rapid and irregular strides, and then, suddenly standing still, sunk into a profound reverie, which the bustle around him in no way disturbed; and when he presently after approached the tafrail, so extraordinary had been his recent conduct, that the officer of the watch, doubting his sanity, cautiously drew near to the spot where he stood, to be ready to seize his person, should he attempt to throw himself overboard, as he fully expected him to do. But a calm seemed to come over his troubled spirit, as he gazed upon the dark blue waters, and the sparkling spray of the dashing

waves, that washed the sides of his gallant ship; for he could now answer with a clear and approving conscience the question that had at first excited so severe a struggle, and so fierce a tumult in his mind.

"Why had he brought this lovely and beloved creature from the protection of her home and friends to a scene and society so little suited to a young and delicate female?"

The solution of this problem had, as we have seen, cost him much anxiety; but he had now decided it by the rules of love and honour. "He would never surrender her." So said Love. "He would do by her all that became a man and a sailor, whatever the world might say." So said Honour.

He had just arrived at this notable conclusion, and was proceeding to enquire if his beloved passenger had yet evinced any signs of returning life, when a new subject presented itself to his attention, and again called forth all the energies of his ardent character, thus relieving one care by the pressure of another.

They were running through the Deeps, and had just entered the channel between the Dog's Head, and the Knock Sands, when the lieutenant of the watch informed the captain, that a strange and suspicious sail was in sight, broad on the weather-bow. Such an intimation at once attracted the earnest attention of all the crew of the saucy little Spitfire, and particularly of her commander; for information had been received, that a notorious Scotch pirate, who had long been the terror of the North Seas, had been seen off the coast; and that the daring freebooter, who commanded her, had made it his boast that he would soon rid the sea of the waspish little craft

that presumed to disturb *honest* traffic, and to carry matters with so high a hand as she had hitherto done. Such a report had put the crew of the Spitfire upon their mettle, and there was consequently nothing they so earnestly desired as an encounter with the saucy rover of the North.

" Crack on, my fine fellows;" said the captain, " and let us overhaul this terrible fellow. It shall go hard but we will make him eat his words."

" All hands make sail." Shouted the lieutenant, which was instantly followed by the boatswain's pipe, and the immediate rush upon deck of the whole crew.

In two minutes she was bending over to the breeze, and, " walking through the waters like a thing of life;" and that too at a rate that promised soon to shorten the distance betwixt her and the Chase. The latter was a clean built, schooner rigged craft, fitted both for war and stowage; and confident in her own sailing points, she stood steadily on her course, notwithstanding the near approach of the government cruiser. It was evident she either did not know, did not fear, or did not intend to avoid, her.—

On nearing the vessel in question, this quietude appeared the more extraordinary to Captain Bertie, for he had no doubt she was the pirate he was in quest of; but this assumed calmness did not deceive, nor induce him to alter his previously determined plan of attack. Every preparation for battle having been made during the run, he now proceeded quietly to shorten sail; which being effected, without even hailing the suspicious stranger, he ran her along-side, and discharged his broadside. This was so quickly responded to by the

enemy, that it was evident he had contemplated taking the cruiser at a disadvantage, and by getting the first fire, perhaps to decide the fate of the battle at once, but the foresight and decision of Captain Bertie had baulked this treachery, and the pirate had nothing for it but to do his best, for he soon found that he had caught a Tartar. Nor were the desperadoes slow to return shot for shot, until both vessels were sadly crippled,—and the Spitfire especially;—in so much so that her gallant young commander resolved at once to decide the fate of the day by a *coup-de-main*. The word was consequently given to run her on board,—to summon the boarders, and to carry the enemy sword in hand. The boarders rallied round their daring leader, happy in the immediate prospect of a close grapple with the foe.

A desperate struggle ensued, in which the pirates thrice repulsed the assailants, who still returned to the charge, and ultimately gained possession of the deck, driving the enemy into the sea, or cutting down all who did not instantly surrender. But ruffians who know their lives are already forfeited to the offended laws of their country, are not men quietly to yield, whatever be the odds against them. The consequence was, that many were cut down fighting to the last gasp; others when hard-pressed jumped overboard; and some few who had run below, passed through the port-holes of the two ships, which were now in conjunction, and thus, unobserved, gained the deck of the cruiser, which in the hurry of battle had been entirely deserted. At this time also it happened that the grappling irons gave way, and the two vessels drifted apart. The fellows who were thus fortunate did not exceed half a dozen, and on perceiving

their advantage, they put the helm up to let her run before the wind, without observing whether her crippled state and the wreck of the top-mast which hung over the quarter, would allow her to fetch way or not; and then proceeded to reconnoitre their unexpected prize.

The captain's cabin was of course the first place to which they directed their attention; and on perceiving its fair inmates, a yell of savage and brutal triumph burst from them, and black and bloody from the fight, as they were, the two foremost rushed down upon their prey. The report of two pistols, and the shriek of the forlorn damsels, rent the air, and reached even to the deck of the pirate ship, and the ears of captain Bertie, who instantly comprehended the whole affair. What was to be done?—the boats were all disabled;—and their vessel lay like a log on the water. There was nothing for it, but to swim back to their ship, desperate as the attempt might appear. The captain, without a moment's hesitation, sprung over-board, and was followed by Bang and some eight or ten others of his most attached adherents, and they struck out manfully for the slowly receding vessel.

Two minutes sufficed to bring Bertie and his midshipman within reach of some the running rigging, which having been cut by the shots was trailing astern, and by which, with the activity of the wild cat, they presently climbed on board. No sooner did their feet touch the deck than they sprung towards the cabin, and strange was the sight which there presented itself to their wondering gaze. At the foot of the accommodation ladder lay two grim corpses weltering in their blood, and at the farther side of the cabin, side by side, stood the lady and

her maid, each armed with a pistol in either hand, pointed towards the four men clustered together on the ladder, afraid either to advance or recede, lest the intrepid heroines, who had shot their companions before their face, should on the instant send them also to their long account. In vain had they several times endeavoured to parley with their fair enemy, who answered not, moved, not, wavered not, and though very pale, steadfastly extended their small taper arms with the deadly weapons directed upon the ruthless foe. The sight was at once beautiful, and dreadful!

No sooner did Bertie see how matters stood, than he cut down the fellow nearest him, and seized a second by the throat, which whilst he was in the act of doing, a third drew his knife and was on the point of thrusting it into his side, when another shot was fired by one of the fair statues, which brought the assassin to the ground; whereupon the survivors surrendered to the overwhelming force, which had by this time got on board.

The interview that followed we must leave to the apprehension of our readers; suffice it to say, that community of danger had ennobled their mutual passion, without detracting from its tenderness, and the interchange of thoughts and vows became more satisfactory. Neither of them had the least doubt or shyness of the other, and in that confidence they were perfectly happy. Nor let the hyper-critic cavil at the heroism of my simple maidens, for, know, 'O vain man,' that woman, gentle, trembling, and confiding woman,—in her extremity,—when love or honour are at stake,—can be brave far beyond the boasted courage of proud man himself.

It had chanced that a small depôt of arms, which was kept on one side of the cabin had been opened to equip the boarders, when several braces of pistols were accidentally left on the cabin table, hence the ladies in the moment of danger, found arms at hand, and showed they had hearts to use them.

CHAPTER VII.

"Know then, you are this landlord, Sir, the sole lord of this demesne and me: this morning I was mistress of this house, these servants, and all the dirty acres within three miles round us; now they are yours, you are their Master now.

THE CUSTOM OF THE MANOR

At the top of the tide, on the morrow, the gallant little sloop of war, the Spitfire, sailed up the harbour, with bands playing and colours flying, followed at a short distance by her prize, the notorious pirate schooner, the Kelpie.

Rumour had not failed to do her part in preparing the good people of Boston for the due reception of their brave defenders; and the consequence was, that the wealthy burgher, with his portly dame and laughter-loving daughters,—the proud baron, with his haughty lady and insolent menials,—together with all the *elite* and beautiful of the town and neighbourhood, and the usual overwhelming supply of that most important and influential portion of every community, the great unwashed, —turned out to welcome the heroes' return, and to gratify their gaping curiosity with a sight of the renowned pirate, Black-Beard, and his no less redoubtable conqueror, Captain Wildfire.

Coldly and indifferently did the bereaved father, Sir William Hussey, survey the approaching vessels, and the animated countenances that thronged the banks of the river, until he was startled by the scream of his daughter, Elizabeth, who was hanging upon his arm.

"My sister!—my sister!" exclaimed the delighted countess.

All eyes were now riveted upon the crowded deck of the Spitfire, one of the most interesting objects upon which was a young lady supported by the arm of Captain Bertie, and who seemed to scan with anxiety the line of spectators, in the hope of discovering some dear friend of her own. At the sound of her sister's voice, Mary Hussey almost fainted upon the arm of her lover, and on recognizing the form of her venerable and beloved father, earnestly entreated to be immediately put ashore. A boat presently placed the lost daughter in the arms of her sire, who hurried away with his invaluable prize to the Tower, and left the multitude to enjoy their own surmises about the scene they had witnessed.

Wonderful indeed were the tales in circulation, touching the adventures and hair-breadth escapes of the beautiful young lady, and the feats of her gallant deliverer; for the popular voice raised the latter into a hero of chivalry, and the former into a captive princess in the hands of the grim Scotch pirate.

This view of the case was of course only the bubble that floated on the surface of the giddy mob; for both Bertie and Mary Hussey at once revealed the whole matter to Sir William, who, happy in the recovery of his daughter, did not refuse to lend a favourable ear to the suit of the young captain, especially as he saw that

his daughter's happiness was depending on his consent. The plea of the pressure of public business, and the necessity of proceeding forthwith to town, in consequence of his important capture, induced Sir William and his daughter, nothing loath, to yield to the earnest entreaties of our young sailor; and the wedding was therefore concluded on the third day after their return to Boston.

After the banquet, which succeeded the ceremony, a large company, consisting of Sir William Hussey, the Earl and Countess of Kent, and the bride and bridegroom, with all their attendants, forming together a cavalcade of about twenty persons, took horse, and after a short refection at Donington, proceeded on to Grimsthorpe Castle, the residence of Lord Willoughby de Eresby, the near and dear kinsman of the bridegroom, where it was proposed they should spend the night.

On entering the Red-Deer Park, which surrounded the Castle for many miles on all sides, Bertie, who during the whole day had been the gayest of the gay, became at once silent, gloomy, and abstracted, forgetting even to reply to the remarks of his fair bride, so that she became alarmed for his health, supposing he must have been seized with sudden illness. To all her enquires he gave but vague replies, and at length excusing himself to the company, and commending his young wife to the care of her father, said he would ride forward and apprize his kinsman of their approach; and abruptly putting spurs to his horse he disappeared amongst the forest trees that now surrounded them on all sides. The cavalcade, though surprised and troubled at this strange desertion of the bridegroom at so interesting a moment, moved slowly forward, passing in their route the cele-

brated Cistertian Abbey, which then stood within sight of the Castle, and presently approached the embattled gate-house of that ancient baronial residence.

Here they found an ample welcome, the gate being open, the draw-bridge lowered, and all the baron's retainers in their rich and splendid liveries, drawn up to receive them.—At the head of the glittering array of men-in-arms, Alice was not slow to recognize, although she could hardly believe her own eyes, the person of her boisterous lover, Jack Bang, himself, in all the ensigns of official dignity, as prime warder, or seneschal of the Castle.

On alighting from their horses, and being ushered into the great hall, the astonishment of the party was again excited, when in the courteous and gorgeously decked nobleman, who advanced to bid them welcome, they discovered no other than the run-away bridegroom, Captain Wildfire, otherwise William Bertie; who instantly advanced to the side of his blushing and almost fainting bride, and said,

"Pardon me, my dear Mary, the little stratagem, which I have employed to give you, I trust, an agreeable surprise. I should not have thus trifled either with you or Sir William, but that having in a youthful frolic laid aside my title, as a useless encumbrance to my course of pleasure, when I first came to Boston, I could not on the instant resume it when I became acquainted with you, without appearing to do so with the unworthy motive of influencing you in my favour by its means; but since I have won my bride as a humble tar, I am proud to introduce her to the station she was born to adorn; and now with all my heart I bid this fair com-

pany welcome to Grimsthorpe Castle, in which welcome, I doubt not, my dear LADY WILLOUGHBY most cordially joins."

Here we would conclude our narrative, but that poetical justice bids us add that the wild and ranting blade, Jack Bang, became in a few years the sober, steady, and demure, John Bang, Esquire, my lord's steward and factotum; and that he took such care of his patron's property, as in due course of time to become himself a rich and great man; and the partner of his fortunes was no other than the whilom waiting-maid, ALICE, who bore her exaltation with all becoming dignity.

END OF THE ABDUCTION.

ICANHOE;

OR,

ST. BOTOLPH AND THE DEVIL.

CHAPTER I.

" Full oft the hunter check'd the ardent chase,
" Dreading the latent bog, and deep morass;
" While like a blasting mildew, wide were spread
" Blue thickening mists in stagnant waters bred."
ABORIGINAL BRITONS, OXF. PRIZE POEM.

ABOUT the middle of the seventh century, the spot upon which the good town of Boston stands, was one of those islands called *holmes*, which rising a little above the level of the watery waste around them, appeared like oases in the marshy desert that then covered the whole of the Fen country. The broad channel of the Witham, unrestrained by banks, and following only its natural course, with every succeeding tide inundated the adjacent district, and rendered an approach to the spot

almost impracticable, except in shoutes, or corra cles, as the rude boats of the day were called.

Large herds of half-wild cattle, that lived by cropping the rank and luxuriant verdure which covered the holmes above described, from one to the other of which they were constantly wading or swimming, formed a striking feature in the otherwise deserted landscape; and the stranger that first beheld them in that situation, with their shaggy coats, was led to doubt their identity with the peaceful kine that feed upon the upland glades, and rather to suppose that he looked upon animals of an amphibious nature, the natives of the intermediate region in which they seemed to thrive and rejoice.

The scanty inhabitants of these desolate morasses, half covered with their own thickly-matted hair, and clad in the undressed skins of the wild cattle which they tended, were scarcely human. Their residence, which was generally a low wattled hut, hid amidst a clump of stunted willows, on one of the small islands that dotted the whole surface of the fenny sea, rendered them independent and fearless of their fellow men, and consequently added a savage recklessness to their wild character, which even at this early stage of our history rendered the Fenman an object of dread to his more civilized neighbour on the highland, or the coast. Yet even in this primitive state of society, party and faction had sown the seeds of discord, so that one ragged rogue arrogated to himself a rank above his brother in iniquity and misery, upon some factitious and imaginary grounds, which often caused the dark waters of the fen to be mingled with blood; for the strong hand alone was the fenman's law. Although two hundred years had already elapsed since the departure of

the Romans, and the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, the animosity of their descendants against each other, and of the aboriginal Britons against both, was constantly the source of strife, whenever the opposing parties chanced to find themselves in contact. The descendants of the Romans, now so far identified with the people with whom they dwelt as to retain only the name and tradition of their descent, affected to despise both Britons and Saxons, as mere barbarians, and every way their inferiors; the Britons, strong in their original right to the soil, regarded both Romans and Saxons with the inveteracy of accumulated wrongs, suffered by a conquered people; while the Saxons, now in the pride of their power, for they had no less than seven flourishing kingdoms in different parts of the island, looked down with contempt upon the abject condition of the two opposing factions, and did not hesitate to make them feel their power, whenever the struggle was brought to an important issue.

The island upon which Boston now stands, was, in the times of which we write, considerably larger than the generality of the holmes above described, and was considered of more importance on account of its near neighbourhood to the town of Kirton, and because it stood on the bank of the Witham at a point where it was fordable; from which last circumstance it derived its ancient name, Icanhoe, which in the Anglo-Saxon language signified Oxenford.

A grey-headed veteran, who had weathered the storms of some sixty years in the fens, and to whom their drear aspect was dearer than the fairest landscape fair Albion could boast,—for they were the scene of his youthful

pleasures, his manly prowess, and the domestic comforts of his age,—this veteran fenman was the tenant of one of the two solitary huts which alone stood on the *terra firma* of Icanhoe. He had been a powerful man in his youth, and his personal strength was backed by an indomitable courage, that rendered him altogether a fit and proper person both to sustain himself, and to gain an influential reputation in so rude a state of society. Of late years he had led a settled life at Icanhoe, where he had turned miller on succeeding to the mill of his father-in-law, and seemed likely to end his days in peace; for the miller of a district, from the usefulness of his trade, was regarded as almost a sacred person by the rude inhabitants. No one thought of injuring the miller, any more than of murdering the priest. The old man had a son and a daughter, who dwelt at-home with him;—his own name was Harold Hopper,—that of his son, Edwin, and of his daughter, Dora. Harold was a true Briton, and gloried in the name, yet of a lion-like character, and confident in his own power to resent an insult, he was slow to take offence.

The tenant of the other hut was a Saxon, a stout brawny fellow, not wanting in courage, but sluggish and inert; he was, as he delighted to style himself, the royal cow-herd, being appointed to take charge of the fen stock belonging to Ethelmund, King of Mercia, who held Icanhoe and the adjoining fens as his own private fief, independent of his right as sovereign lord of that, in common with the rest of his dominions. The Saxon, whose name was Leolf, on first taking his station at Icanhoe, regarded the sturdy old miller as an unauthorized intruder upon his domain, and more particularly so

because he was a Briton; nor did he hesitate bluntly to express his opinion, and to intimate his intention to endeavour to get rid of the mill and its appurtenances, if he had any influence with the powerful proprietor of the soil. This threat he did not fail to do his best to fulfil, but either he had overrated his own influence with his royal master, or the miller had a friend at court that had averted the mischief, for the mill still continued to clack, to the great annoyance of the cow-herd, until one day——

Upon the evening of that day, Leolf, after sounding his dismal cow's horn to call the herd together, as was his wont at night fall, whilst patting one of his curly-headed young bullocks, was turned upon by the playful brute and tossed into the air. He fell, much hurt, into the water near, and being utterly unable to help himself, would soon have been suffocated but for the timely assistance of young Hopper, who presently dragged him to the shore. On finding there was no fire in the cowherd's hut, the young miller bore him away to his own snug home, where the Saxon was welcomed by the father, and nursed by the daughter, until his recovery, which did not take place until the lapse of ten days, during the whole of which time the son performed all the duties of the invalid's office. It will be naturally supposed that from that time forth he became as much the friend, as he had before been the enemy, of the miller's family; and spent most of his idle hours, and he had many, in gossiping with old Harold at the mill-door, or in chatting and laughing with his pretty daughter at the cottage window.

CHAPTER II.

" In Lincolnshire, fast by the fenne,
" Standeth a Religious House—Who doth it kenne?"
CHAUCER.

In the year 654, Ethelmund, Earl of Mercia, and King of the South Angles, held his court at the then important town of Kirton,[a] now known only as a small village about four miles from Boston.

Father Botolph, a pious Saxon priest, afterwards renowned as St. Botolph, ' whose locks are said by an ancient writer to have been white as wool, and his beard like the down of the thistle,'—this venerable personage was deservedly held in high esteem by the Mercian Prince, whose confessor he was, and who at his request granted him a plot of ground at Icanhoe, on the north side[b] of the present church, upon which to erect and establish a monastery. This grant was made in the year 654;[c] and the reason assigned for the selection of so desolate a spot, is that the saint had determined not to dispossess any previous possessor, even for so good a purpose; and the locality, thus chosen, is described as " an untilled place, a wilderness, whereon no man dwelt."[d]

It is also certain, that, in the earlier stages of a faith yet uncorrupted, it was a material principle with its most

a Stukeley b Saxon Chronicle. c Life of St. Botolph. d Stukeley.

enthusiastic devotees to divest themselves, as much as possible, of the world by which they were surrounded,—to stand apart from the bustle of life, and the fever of society; that they might without distraction devote themselves to the service of their God. It will at once be seen that no spot could be more eligible for such a purpose than Icanhoe. It is also probable that the facility with which bread, fish, and water, which constituted the principal food of the primitive monastic fraternities, could be there obtained, may have had its weight in the selection. Be that as it may, the work progressed rapidly, workmen and materials arriving daily; and the hitherto solitary and silent *holme* soon became a scene of busy life, with all its attendant commotions: so that although the good monk had originally sought Icanhoe with a view to the pleasures of solitude, that coy nymph took flight at his first appearance, and has never returned to the spot since. For scarcely had the walls of the new monastery risen above the foundation, when huts sprang up all over the island, like mushrooms, for the accommodation of the workmen, suttlers and others, who thronged to supply the new settlement with provisions and other necessaries. These temporary dwelling places soon assumed a more permament form, for many of the more peaceful denizens of the Fens gladly fixed their residence in the neighbourhood of a religious establishment, and under ecclesiastical protection, which had already become the most powerful arm of the body politic.

Here then we have our embryo town of Boston, the principal sea-port in Lincolnshire, the centre of one of the greatest agricultural districts in the kingdom, and, in a word, the future Metropolis of the Fens.

CHAPTER III.

"Heaven prosper our sport! No one means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns." MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

MANY of our readers, who are in the practice of traversing the footpath which passes through the churchyard, at the foot of the steeple, are well acquainted with the remarkable fact, that whatever wind is blowing, it is always felt more strongly on that particular spot than any where else. We know that some vain-glorious philosophers have pretended to explain this phenomenon on what they call scientific principles, but we have too much regard for the wisdom of past times to lend ourselves rashly to the propagation of any such new fangled doctrines, especially when we find the matter so satisfactorily explained in the traditions of our forefathers. Be it therefore known unto all whom it may concern, that shortly after the completion of the monastery before referred to, St. Botolph proceeded to erect a chapel for the public worship of the rapidly increasing community of Icanhoe, which already began to be designated St. Botolph's Town.[a] The engine-house at the south-western

a The etymology of the present name of Boston has been derived by some writers from the Latin word Bos, an Ox, which they contend to be the translation of *Yccan*, meaning in Anglo Saxon *Oxen*, from which there is no doubt that the primitive name, Icanhoe, was formed; but we rather conceive the word, Boston, to be the popular abbreviation of its long ancient designation, St. Botolph's Town: as in the case of Brighton for Brighthelmstone, and others that might be quoted.

corner of the present parish church, is supposed to be the remains of the primitive chapel.

Now this holy monk, like Issac of old, was wont to take an evening stroll, to commune with own heart and his God; and his promenade was generally confined to a short space near the western extremity of the new chapel, from which he could contemplate and enjoy the glories of the setting sun over the far-waste of waters.

On one of these occasions, whilst slowly pacing to and from on the spot before described, the saint became aware that his thoughts were not flowing in their usually calm and pious tenour; but that pride at his extraodinary success in establishing a monastery in that desolate region,—vain glory at the rising splendour of his chapel, and an over-weaning self-satisfaction at the reverence with which he was regarded by the society he had collected around him, had taken deep possession of his mind, which had hitherto been free from such pollutions. "What could these be," he asked himself, "but the suggestions of the wicked one, who, enraged at seeing another kingdom wrested from his empire, sought to subvert the whole by tempting the founder himself to sin and destruction, and that too, the subtle serpent, by that most fatal delusion of religious enthusiasts—spiritual pride!" No sooner had this conviction entered the good man's breast, than with a prayer for pardon and grace, he addressed himself to resist the devil, confident in the promise that the tempter would then flee from him; and whilst in the earnestness of his fancied resistance, the monk extended his arm as if to drive the foul fiend from him, he became suddenly aware of the presence of his Satanic Majesty, in *propriâ personâ*, on the

crown of the causeway immediately before him. Nothing startled at such an apparition, the saint instantly seized the demon by the throat, and a most desperate struggle ensued;—pull devil,—pull saint; until a mist enveloped the heated combatants: but the saint prevailing in his integrity, most soundly belaboured the infernal, until the poor devil puffed and blowed so violently as to raise a whirlwind, which has never since entirely subsided.

Hence the constant wind which prevails to this day at the foot of the steeple of St. Botolph's church; which, it is supposed, the Prince of Darkness still keeps up in the hope of one day avenging the thrashing he there received, by blowing down the steeple itself about the ears of the inhabitants.

We trust that our version of the affair has for ever silenced the babble of the would-be philosophers above alluded to; for if this explanation of the phenomenon be not satisfactory, we know not what will.

CHAPTER IV

" Give him all kindness : I had rather have
" Such men my friends, than enemies. JULIUS CÆSAR.

Two years had now elapsed since the establishment of the monastery at Icanhoe; and yet Dora, the miller's buxom daughter, continued in a state of single blessedness, although all the young men in the island courted her smile, and aspired to her hand. She laughed them all to scorn, and her veteran admirer, Leolf, amongst the number; until, piqued at her contempt, he and several others of the rejected suitors, made common cause against the disdainful fair, and resolved to watch her every movement until they discoved their secret rival, whose existence alone they conceived could account for their own failures.

They were not much mistaken in this surmise; for they had not watched many days, when they discovered that Dora met a man every evening at the back of the mill, who came up the river shortly after sun-set in a shoute alone. This unpardonable intrusion of a stranger excited all the fiercest passions of jealousy and rage in the Saxon cowherd and his confederates; and they therefore determined to surprise and seize him on the very

next visit; which they did accordingly, for the lover, true to his appointment,and suspicious of no treachery, rarived at the usual time and place; but had no sooner quitted his boat, than he was surrounded and overpowered. But what was the surprise of the captors, when they discovered in their prisoner the notorious Alan Toft, the head of a numerous band of Britons, that had long set at defiance the power of the Mercian King, and who possessed several fastnesses on the holmes of Fishtoft, whence Ethelmund had in vain endeavoured to dislodge them. The Saxon Prince had but very recently set a high price on the head of this very chief, in consequence of a foray lately made by his party in the town of Kirton itself, in which they had plundered his palace and carried off his only son, an infant, and the heir to his name and honours. The infant prince had however been since restored to his disconsolate father by an unknown hand, who on replacing the tender babe on its mother's breast, refused any reward, except permission to retire unquestioned. The depredations of these desperate sons of liberty had made them peculiarly the terror of the new colony, and the capture of their chief was consequently an event hailed with joy by all parties at Icanhoe, except the poor miller's maid.

Information was immediately dispatched to Kirton, where the king then was, that his enemy was now in his power; and the messenger, on his return, brought orders that a gibbet should be forthwith erected, and all things prepared for his execution by break of day, when the monarch himself would arrive to see the rebel die.

These orders were strictly obeyed, so that when the Mercian prince arrived, he beheld the convict kneeling

with the priest at the foot of the gallows, and penitently commending his soul to his maker. The sight struck even the heart of Ethelmund, for, instead of the handsome and elegant youth before him, he had expected to see, in the noted Alan Toft, a ruffian of the rudest order. His devotions over, the prince ordered the prisoner to be brought before him, but no sooner did he recognize his features than he exclaimed,

"This is not Alan Toft, but the preserver of my child,—my darling child, Ethelbert."

"My Lord," replied the prisoner, "Alan Toft now stands before you. I restored your child, because I war not with infants, but with men, who, not content with the entire possession of our country, wish to deprive me and mine of our liberty also."

"Unbind him," exclaimed the Saxon Prince. "Were he ten times my foe, I could not shed his blood after the act of mercy he has performed on me and my child."

"Toft," he continued, stretching out his hand to the now unshackled Briton, "we must be friends."

"With all my heart," replied Toft, grasping the royal hand extended towards him.

"And," continued the prince, "to render our union more binding, I hereby grant you free soc and soccage over all the fens, holts, and holmes of Fishtoft."

"My Lord," resumed, Toft, "my future conduct shall prove to you, that he, who has been an uncompromising foe, can be a faithful friend."

Thus terminated for ever the feud between the Britons and Saxons in the Fen country, for all the members of his party instantly followed the example of Toft, who was a lineal discendant of one of the aboriginal chiefs.

The union of Alan Toft with the beautiful miller's maid took place about a month after the event above recorded; and was celebrated at Icanhoe with great rejoicings; but from that day forth nothing was ever heard or seen of poor Leolf, who was supposed to have thrown himself into the Witham in a fit of despair and jealousy.

FINIS.

JOHN NOBLE, PRINTER, MARKET-PLACE, BOSTON.

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